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Jewish Community Federation Leadership Oral History Project

Brian L. Lurie

FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEWISH COMMUNITY FEDERATION OF SAN FRANCISCO,
THE PENINSULA, MARIN AND SONOMA COUNTIES, 1974-1991

With Introductions by
Wayne Feinstein
and
Jesse Feldman

Interviews Conducted by
Eleanor Glaser
in 1991

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Jewish community executive

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Family background, Jewish community, Cleveland, OH; education at Lafayette College, and Hebrew Union College, 1964-1969; rabbinical student in Israel during 1967 war; assistant rabbi, Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco, 1969-1972; assistant to executive, United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York, 1972-1974; executive director, San Francisco-based Jewish Welfare Federation (renamed Jewish Community Federation), 1974-1991: management, staff, lay leaders, federation board and presidents, innovations, fundraising, allocations, confederation, demographic study, Jewish Community Endowment Fund, Jewish education, national federation trends, challenging United Jewish Appeal and Jewish Agency, projects in Israel; executive vice president, United Jewish Appeal, 1991.

Introductions by Wayne Feinstein, Executive Director of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation; and Jesse Feldman, Past President of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation.

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PREFACE

The Jewish Community Federation Leadership Oral History Project was initiated in 1990, under the sponsorship of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, to record the recent history of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Through oral histories with the sixteen living past presidents and two past executives of the Federation, the project seeks to document Jewish philanthropy in the West Bay as spearheaded by the Federation during the past half-century.

The Jewish community can take pride in the manner in which it has, through the years, assumed the traditional Jewish role of providing for the less fortunate. Organized Jewish philanthropy in San Francisco began in 1850 with the Eureka Benevolent Association, today's Jewish Family and Children's Service Agency. With the organization in 1910 of the Federation of Jewish Charities, the community took the major step of coordinating thirteen separate social service agencies. The funding of local services was absorbed by the Community Chest when the Federation affiliated with it in 1922. Soon thereafter, the need was seen for an organization to support the financial needs of national and overseas agencies. This led to the formation of the Jewish National Welfare Fund in 1925, which pioneered in conducting a single annual campaign for Jewish needs outside of San Francisco. The Federation of Jewish Charities and the Jewish National Welfare Fund merged in 1955, becoming the Jewish Welfare Federation, the forerunner of the present Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

This oral history project was conceived by Phyllis Cook, executive director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, and Eleanor Glaser, the oral historian who had just completed the oral history of Sanford M. Treguboff, the late executive director of the Federation. They realized that 1990 would be the thirty-fifth year of the Jewish Welfare Federation and that it was none too soon to try to capture the insights and experiences of the Federation's first presidents. Not only would these leaders be able to document the dynamic history of the Federation, but they could link that to the activities of several other agencies since all had prepared themselves for their services as Federation president by working in one or another capacity in the earlier Jewish charitable institutions.

Thus, it was anticipated that through the recollections of these Federation presidents it might be also possible to understand the driving motivations and principles of those pioneer leaders and the forces they dealt with during the building of the Bay Area Jewish community.

Phyllis Cook, in consultation with the board of directors of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, worked with the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, to carry out the project. Direction of the project was assumed by Eleanor Glaser, the office research editor for Jewish history subjects.

In the oral history process the interviewer works closely with the memoirist in the preliminary research and in setting up topics for discussion. For the Federation project, Eleanor Glaser conducted extensive research in the Federation Board minutes in order to determine critical events, committee assignments, and the pressing needs during each president's term of office. The interviews are informal conversations that are tape recorded, transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity and clarity, checked and approved by the interviewee, and then final typed. The oral history manuscripts are open to research in libraries nationwide. Copies of the Federation project oral histories will be available in the Federation Library; The Bancroft Library; the Department of Special Collections, Library, UCLA; and in other libraries interested in collecting source material on this subject.

Sam Ladar, president of the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1965 and 1966, was the first interviewee. As the initial oral history for the project, general Federation information such as early board minutes, lists of officers, etc., have been included in the Ladar volume. Researchers are advised to start there.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to record the lives of persons who have contributed significantly to the history of California and the West. The Office is administered by The Bancroft Library. Over the years the Office has documented a number of leaders in the California Jewish community. The Office is honored to have this opportunity to document Jewish philanthropy in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Eleanor Glaser, Project Director
Jewish Community Federation Leadership
Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Division Head
Regional Oral History Office

December 1996
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The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Jewish Community Federation Leadership Oral History Project Series List

- Jerome Braun, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1979-1980, 1995*
- Jesse Feldman, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1973-1974, 1991*
- Frances D. Green, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1975-1976, 1996*
- Richard N. Goldman, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1981-1982, 1993*
- Peter E. Haas, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1977-1978, 1994*
- Samuel A. Ladar, *A Reflection on the Early Years of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation, 1990*
- William J. Lowenberg, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1983-1984, 1995*
- Brian Lurie, *Former Executive Director, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1974-1991, 1997*
- Laurence E. Myers, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1986-1988, 1993*
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- John H. Steinhart, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1969-1970, 1992*
- Melvin M. Swig, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1971-1972, 1992*
- Louis E. Weintraub, *Administration of the San Francisco Jewish Welfare Fund, 1970-1975, 1996*

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- Ronald Kaufman, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1984-1986*
- Donald Seiler, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1990-1992*
- Roselyne C. Swig, *President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1992-1994*

INTRODUCTION by Wayne Feinstein

Forty-nine is a tender age for an oral history. But Brian Lurie began to make indelible marks on the Jewish community at a tender age. His personal, profound, ever-deepening commitment to Israel--her people and her land--has been institutionalized in an entire Jewish community.

As a rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College, he was the leader of the first class to insist that rabbinic training the Reform Movement require a year of study in Israel. As an assistant rabbi at Temple Emanuel in San Francisco, he created and subsequently institutionalized the confirmation class Israel experience. This program was so exciting and successful that before his tenure ended as assistant rabbi, the Bureau of Jewish Education had taken it over as a community-wide program.

At the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York, where we met, he developed programs, but more importantly connected individuals--who in the last twenty years have gone on to serve in the very top leadership positions of the New York and national Jewish communities--with his special charisma and commitment to Israel and Jewish peoplehood. During the Yom Kippur War, in October 1973, we lived together in the office at 220 West 58th Street, for three weeks, feeling the acute anxieties, occasional despair, and manic need to help our people in distress. Brian kept our spirits high, not only of his immediate team, but also of the leadership whom he touched with his vision and passion. By the time his brief tenure had ended in New York, he had reached most of the children of New York's top leadership who heretofore had been uninvolved in Jewish Community affairs and connected them through leadership development programs to embark on the course that has resulted in many assuming top leadership in the world's single largest Jewish community.

But to date, Brian's most important contributions to the Jewish world have been rooted and nurtured in the fertile environment of the San Francisco Bay Area over a seventeen-and-a-half-year period of his tenure as executive director of the Jewish Community Federation. Over the years of his tenure, some of the more innovative contributions have been warmly received by key leadership, debated and refined through the communal decision-making process and then adopted as policy and program commitment of the Jewish Community Federation. Many of these creative approaches to bridging Israel-diaspora relations: the person-to-person connection of Project Renewal, the personal relationships that developed between the Federation's Overseas Committee and the AMUTA of Israeli leaders, the efforts in economic development and economic reform [which?] were each challenged by the establishment of the organized Jewish community in the East and in Jerusalem as radical intrusions into their domain. But without exception, each of these ideas--that sprung from Brian's creative mind and were warmly received by his own community--have gradually worked their way into the fabric of American Jewish communal institutional relationships with the people of Israel.

Additionally, Brian has led the effort to refocus the Federation movement on those problems of contemporary American Jewish life in which it alone is institutionally capable of causing significant progress by catalyzing and coordinating others: synagogues, Jewish centers, Hillels, campuses. He has fostered innovations in Jewish identity-building which recent Jewish population studies have noted is [are?] among the most serious challenges we face as we look towards the next century. Brian introduced communal support for Jewish day school education in the Bay Area, for Jewish camps, and Israel programming. Together with Israeli friends in the Israel Forum he--more than any other American Jewish leader, lay or professional--has helped to establish creative programs such as OTZMA to take "the best and brightest" Jewish college graduates and give them a meaningful volunteer experience in Israel or LEHAVVA, a program aimed at high school students with similar components. His innovative approach to traditional communal services has included the stimulation of the San Francisco Jewish Museum, the housing of it in a beautiful community administrative quarters on Steuart Street, the creation of the Marin Campus, fostering the development of the South Peninsula JCC and the Albert Shultz building and many more.

But this brief introduction to Brian Lurie's contributions to Jewish life in the Bay Area and worldwide would be incomplete without comment about his unique personal qualities. Brian has intense focus that few see until they get to know him well, because he masks it with a disarming and charming warmth and sense of humor. He has acute psychological insight, including an unusual ability to find one's strengths and, as he often puts it, "character flaws." He has the unusual ability of great leaders to help people to see how they can contribute to the Jewish people and moreover that they want to make that contribution.

On a very personal note, Brian Lurie is a marvelous, good friend. While he shares his warmth with all, friendship comes slowly and then it endures all types of travails. He is deeply committed to his family and considers his close friends part of his family. He's fiercely loyal to his friends and receives fierce loyalty in exchange.

I was deeply flattered to have been invited to write this introduction, as I was when my own recollections were solicited in preparation of this volume. As Brian moves on to the next challenge of Jewish life, I'm confident that the qualities that are innately his and which have been so well tested and refined in his work in the Bay Area will take the agenda of the American Jewish community successfully along critical paths and that we will benefit from his vision and leadership and grow from strength to strength.

Wayne Feinstein
Executive Director, San Francisco-based
Jewish Community Federation

August 1991
Los Angeles, California

INTRODUCTION by Jesse Feldman

It is a privilege to have been invited to write an introduction to the oral history of Rabbi Brian Lurie.

Brian and I had the briefest of acquaintance while he served for three years as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El. The close friendship we now share sprang from the happenstance of a chance meeting at a quarterly of the Council of Jewish Federations in New York in the fall of 1972, while Brian was on the staff of the New York UJA. From that date until the Yom Kippur War in 1973 we were in close communication. Brian knew by that time he wished to return to San Francisco, and I, then serving as president of the Jewish Community Federation, knew that I wished to see him on our staff.

In the eighteen years that have elapsed Brian has become a warm and beloved friend. His older sons, whom I have observed from birth and infancy, identify themselves as grandsons when they address the receptionist at my residence. Admittedly, I do not write about Brian objectively.

The dramatic changes which have occurred in our Jewish community during Brian's tenure to be attributed to his leadership are widely known. The innovative nature of our overseas program--not without initial controversy directed to Brian personally--have resulted in national and international recognition being accorded to the community.

Where does one look for an explanation of his accomplishments?

Pervasive with Brian is an overwhelming love and concern for the Jewish people. This contributes to his acknowledged personal magnetism and may be credited for much of the success he has experienced.

One necessarily must describe Brian as exceedingly bright, a gifted teacher, a loving spouse and father, a warm and even emotional friend, tenacious in pursuing goals the rectitude of which he is convinced, not to be diverted by controversy--culminating in his recent selection by acclamation for the key professional position of the United Jewish Appeal.

A paragon--a model of perfection and excellence? Hardly! For all his outstanding qualities, Brian is very much a human being, as one would wish him to be. Some of my fondest memories relate to seemingly violent arguments between us in his mother's presence while she was alive, which invariably prompted her to ask, "Jesse, do you and Brian always talk to one another that way?"

I look forward with keen interest to a reading of Brian's oral history. Another volume will have to be written, I am sure, when he looks backwards on the responsibilities which he is about to undertake which will place him in the eye of the storm which Israel faces in the immediate years ahead.

Jesse Feldman
Past President, San Francisco-based
Jewish Community Federation

July 1991
San Francisco, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY--Brian Lurie

In 1990, the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of San Francisco launched the Jewish Community Leadership Project, funding interviews with past Federation president in order to document the history of the San Francisco-based Federation. In addition, since the Regional Oral History Office had previously completed the memoirs of the late Sanford M. Treguboff, long time executive director of the Federation, the Endowment Fund decided to include the oral histories of other former Federation directors.

Rabbi Lurie, then the executive director of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation., had given notice that he intended to leave the Federation on his fiftieth birthday, August 21, 1992. When I met with him on March 20, 1991 to obtain background information on the next two past presidents before beginning their interviews, Rabbi Lurie informed me that he planned to leave his post a year earlier than previously announced. One of several candidates for the position of executive director of the United Jewish Appeal, Rabbi Lurie had high expectations that he would be selected, which would call for his moving to New York by early autumn. Because of his early departure, Rabbi Lurie became the next interviewee, and we pushed ahead with frequent interviews so as to be finished before his August departure.

Brian Lurie gave me an extensive list of people to whom I should talk for background material on his seventeen-year tenure with the San Francisco-based Federation. He suggested all of the past presidents, but since it was necessary to move quickly, it was not feasible to interview all thirteen. Those to whom I did talk were Jesse Feldman, Mrs. Frances Green, Richard Goldman, and Robert Sinton. I also spoke to Mrs. Fae Asher, the widow of Rabbi Joseph Asher; Phyllis Cook, the executive director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund; and former Federation staff members Nat Starr, Norman Rosenblatt, and Wayne Feinstein, whom the Federation search committee later chose as Rabbi Lurie's successor. At the time we met, Mr. Feinstein was the executive director of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles.

Everyone who comes in contact with Rabbi Lurie calls him Brian, and this was true for me as well. We were on a first name basis during the nine taping sessions, eight of which were held in Brian's office in the Federation headquarters building that overlooks the Embarcadero and the bay. At the time of the first interview on April 9, 1991, the earthquake-damaged Embarcadero Freeway was being demolished. Our interview was conducted to the loud thump, thump of the heavy-duty equipment and the crashing sound of large blocks of concrete being loaded onto trucks.

Three weeks went by before the next interview as we both were part of the Mega-Mission to Israel, along with more than three hundred others from the entire Bay Area. During some of the mission's scheduled events, I was able to observe Brian's personal relationship with many top Israeli personalities.

It is his close ties to Israel--his passion for Israel--that everyone speaks of. (This is coupled with his other priority, Jewish education.) It was when Brian was in Israel in 1966-1967 as a Hebrew Union College rabbinic student that he developed his love for Israel. He stated, "Israel was the catalyzing event in my life. To say I was comfortable there is just an understatement..I really felt at home." His identification with the country was intensified by experiencing the 1967 war: "The Sixty-Seven War was clearly the most powerful experience in my life; it really has shaped me."

Upon being ordained, Brian's first (and only) pulpit assignment was Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, where he served as assistant rabbi to Rabbi Joseph Asher. Brian loved Temple Emanu-El; in our preliminary talk he said, "It was one of the nicer three years of my life." It was his idea that the temple's confirmation class go to Israel during the summer. By his third year at Temple Emanu-El, Brian stated, "It was 160 kids going from all over the Bay Area."

Deciding to leave the rabbinate when his tenure at Temple Emanu-El was over, Brian accepted an offer to become an assistant to the executive director of the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York. Not at all happy living in New York, he did not hesitate at the chance to return to San Francisco when contacted by Federation leaders. After one year with the San Francisco-based Jewish Welfare Federation, he became its executive director when only thirty-two years old. Rabbi Lurie stated, "I was the youngest person in the history of the federation movement to take over a major city."

Many of those with whom I talked spoke of Brian Lurie as a visionary, mentioning his energy and charisma, his capacity to enflame people with his own enthusiasm, his exceptional fundraising capabilities, and his willingness to take risks. One community leader stated, "The more I knew Brian the more I admired and respected him. I think he set himself a goal of taking the San Francisco Jewish community from being a relatively passive community to become a real leader among the larger Jewish communities. Under Brian's administration we took a great leap forward. I cannot think of anyone else who could have done as good a job as Brian did over all."

Another person said, "In addition to being an inspirational guy, Brian is a consummate politician. He was able to bring opposing forces together." Still another reaction: "I think Brian is good with the

volunteers. He sees their weaknesses and strengths and somehow knows how to deal with it. I think that's his rabbinic background. It's as if he has a handle on their soul. He's good, his record stands on its own, he's been effective in what he's done."

A volunteer commenting on Brian as a fundraiser stated, "Brian is the best fundraiser I know. He can ask for money better than anyone I know because he really believes in what and why he's asking for that money." He went on to say, "Brian made people feel good about being Jewish. He has a passion for the Jewish people and it's infectious. Also, he brought new life and vigor and the Federation became the Jewish community for many of us. We felt it was a good place to be, that we could do a lot of good through the Federation umbrella, and that it should be the central address for the Jewish people of this community. Before Brian came, I'm not sure people took much pride in the Federation."

When asked about his management style, Brian said, "I am a much better administrator than people think. I am much more hands-on than people would have thought. I can administer very well because...the major talent of an administrator is allowing good people to work and supporting them and making them feel good about what they're doing."

While not all agreed with that assessment, there was consensus on Rabbi Lurie's ability to bring about innovations. Among the innovations implemented during his administration were weekend retreats for Federation board members, establishing regional Federation offices in the Peninsula and Marin County, and a move toward confederation among the Federations of San Francisco, San Jose, the East Bay, and Sacramento. Also innovative programs were undertaken to bring the San Francisco Federation into a much closer relationship with Israel. This included embarking on Project Renewal--a twinning program with two Israeli towns; a large increase in the number of missions to Israel; starting Amuta, a committee of Israelis with whom the Federation has a special relationship; establishing an Federation office in Jerusalem. These latter moves angered some of the leaders of a number of national Jewish organizations.

It wasn't until mid-July, 1991, that Brian learned he was selected as the new head of the United Jewish Appeal. There had been some tension during our six interviews in May as he awaited word of the decision by the UJA's search committee. The taping sessions were interrupted a number of times as he took phone calls from Israel and from New York. Brian had reason to feel uncertain. While believing himself to be the best qualified candidate, there was his past reputation as a maverick, a trouble maker, because of actions against "the establishment" taken by the San Francisco-based Federation under his leadership.

For example, Brian had called for a reorganization of the United Jewish Appeal and the Jewish Agency; he wanted an accountability for the funds raised by the American Diaspora. The Federation took further anti-establishment action by allocating \$100,000 of its overseas dollars for direct distribution by Amuta, deducting that amount from the campaign funds annually given to the United Jewish Appeal. When other federations followed suit, Brian's actions were validated. Changes have been made in the organizations criticized by Brian, and he stated the San Francisco Federation is no longer in an adversarial position vis-a-vis these institutions.

After seventeen years Brian moved on to play a role on a much larger stage as the head of the national organization he had once challenged. But his leaving was tempered with some regret. Although he felt it was time for a change, he loves San Francisco and the Bay Area. The San Francisco-based Federation is different from the one Brian took over in 1975, and while it will undoubtedly be changed by a new administration, Brian's innovations will remain his legacy.

The eight interviews with Rabbi Lurie were hurriedly transcribed and edited so that he could review them during his vacation and before departing for New York. While he didn't return the manuscript until after settling into his new position, Brian asked for another interview in order to talk about his family. This was accomplished in San Francisco on December 19, 1992 when he and his family were staying with his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Fromm. Brian carefully read all nine transcribed interviews but made very few changes.

There was a goodly amount of give and take in our interview sessions and Lurie related many amusing anecdotes. Rabbi Lurie was forthcoming, speaking openly and with emotion. Because Brian is not one to soft pedal his opinions, he decided to keep his oral history under seal for five years; it will be released in November, 1997.

At Rabbi Lurie's suggestion, Wayne Feinstein, his successor, and Jesse Feldman, Federation president in 1973-74, were asked to write introductions to the volume. We appreciate their cooperation and also wish to thank Patrice Rada, Rabbi Lurie's secretary, for her help in supplying documents and scheduling Brian's interviews at a time when he was so busy.

Eleanor Glaser
Interviewer/Editor

January 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Brian L. Lurie

Date of birth 8/21/42 Birthplace Cleveland, Ohio

Father's full name Lawrence Lurie
manufacturer of corrugated
 Occupation & wooden boxes, lawyer Birthplace Canada

Mother's full name Rita Lurie

Occupation Housewife Birthplace Russia

Your spouse Caroline Lurie

Occupation Therapist Birthplace Calif.

Your children Ari (25), Daniel (20), Alexander (13), +
Sonia (10)

Where did you grow up? Cleveland, Ohio

Present community San Francisco/Marin

Education Pls. see attached (p. 256)

Occupation(s) _____

Areas of expertise Fund-raising, Israeli/Diaspora
relations, American Jewish Community, Futuring
the Jews

Other interests or activities Swimming & quality
time with children

Organizations in which you are active _____

I EARLY YEARS IN CLEVELAND, BORN AUGUST 21, 1942

[Interview 1: April 9, 1991] ##¹

Glaser: What year were you born in Cleveland, Ohio?

Lurie: In 1942, August 21, 1942.

Family Members

Sister, Constance Weiss

Glaser: Do you have any siblings?

Lurie: I have an older sister, Connie. Constance Weiss.

Glaser: Where does she live?

Lurie: She lives in Morro Bay.

Father, Lawrence Lurie

Glaser: Tell me about your father, his name and where was he born.

Lurie: Lawrence, and he was born in Canada. I am ashamed to say that I'm not one hundred percent sure if it were Toronto or Ottawa. I believe that he was born in Toronto.

Glaser: What did he do for a living?

¹This symbol (##) indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

Lurie: He went to Case Western Reserve University--it was actually just Western Reserve University at the time--he went to law school there as well. He graduated from law school in the middle of the Depression and went to work for his father-in-law, who was in the wooden box business. He practiced six months of law and then he went to work for his father-in-law. He immediately ran his father-in-law's business and began to support not only my grandfather but a brother-in-law and his family and our family in this box business, which was also a tire business. It became a corrugated box business after World War II.

Glaser: Did you know your paternal grandparents?

Lurie: Paternal, no. Maternal, yes.

Mother, Rita Newmark Lurie

Glaser: Let's talk about your mother first. Tell me her name.

Lurie: Her name was Rita. Rita Newmark.

Glaser: Was she born in Cleveland?

Lurie: She was born in Russia.

Glaser: Do you know where?

Lurie: My sister does. I do not. Shame on me that I don't.

Glaser: Do you know when the family came over?

Lurie: In just the beginning of the twentieth century. Something like 1905, 1906. I'd have to work it out now. My mother would have been eighty. So she was one, so she came over seventy-nine years ago. Eighty years ago was '11, so she came in 1912 to America.

Maternal Grandparents, Osna and Shale Newmark

Glaser: What were her parents like?

Lurie: They were Osna and Shale.

Glaser: How close were you to them?



Brian Lurie, circa 1945.

Lurie: Very. I grew up really in their home for the first fourteen years of my life. So, my grandparents were as close to me as my parents. Those two grandparents. We lived in the same house, on the same floor. It was a very warm and very intimate relationship.

Glaser: Did you get Judaism from your grandfather?

Lurie: You almost got nothing from my grandfather except a presence. I think he was a lost man. I didn't know him when he was in Russia, but clearly, from the time I knew him on, he was this very loving, very warm, and very silent man. He said very little. If I had to capture a pose or a moment with him, it is his sitting in a chair, looking out the window.

Glaser: It sounds sad.

Lurie: I don't know if I would say sad; he was some place else. He was actually quite happy. He lived well into his eighties. I don't think I ever heard the man complain. He smiled a lot, did not frown; he was just not involved with the day to day. I think he was that way from the time he came over to America.

They moved to a place called Tindle, South Dakota. They were the only Jewish family. That's where my mother went to primary school. She had three siblings, two brothers and a sister. She was the second youngest. There was a sister--the oldest--and a brother, then my mother and then a younger brother. They grew up in Tindle, South Dakota, the only Jewish family, parents barely speaking English, running the only general store in town.

Glaser: What brought them to Cleveland?

Lurie: It was a combination of things. I think a brother of my grandmother had already moved to Cleveland, so that was part of it. The other part of it is they wanted the girls to meet Jewish men, especially my mother, because there were no Jews around. Rose had started dating non-Jews and that really bothered them. So they figured that they would go to a big city and Cleveland was the big city.

Glaser: Because they had somebody there.

Lurie: Here they had come all the way across country and now they were moving back.

Glaser: What was your grandmother like?

Lurie: My grandmother was the matriarch. She was the boss of the family. She ran things. A woman with laughter that was uncontrollable. She would remember stories--in fact, she told the story of how she met my grandfather. Her father told her that he was coming to court and she looked out the window and saw him and she burst into hysterics and was laughing so hard that her father pushed her in a closet. She never met him, that first trip, because she couldn't stop laughing.

Glaser: Did she ever say why?

Lurie: She just thought he was funny looking.

Glaser: [laughter] That doesn't sound like a good reason for marrying, or a good basis for it.

Lurie: I didn't think she had much choice about marrying him. I think it was all set up. That was my grandmother; she had this tremendous emotional range where she would laugh and cry and be the boss. But also, although she had a lot of illnesses, a lot of operations, a lot of things--not psychosomatic but real things--she didn't complain. Maybe it's because I was a child and I just didn't hear the complaints.

My mother complained. I remember my mother's complaints as having to take care of my grandmother or having to take care of her house and not having a house of her own--being uncomfortable and cramped. She complained to my father; my father sort of deflected saying, "Well, if you're really unhappy we'll move, but not yet." Not ever getting quite up to moving. Finally, only after I graduated from the ninth grade did we move.

My grandmother's moods, being the matriarch of the family--she was an unusual woman.

Glaser: Did she have anything to do with the business at all?

Lurie: She ran the general store, not my grandfather. Honestly, I don't think my grandfather did much of anything. When I saw him in this corrugated wooden box business as a kid, when I would go down and visit my father and spend time there, he just sat there. When I say he just sat, he wasn't out of it. He would shuffle papers. But then my father ran the business.

Glaser: But your grandfather was enough with it to have established the business, or was it an uncle?

Lurie: I am not certain what happened there. I am not certain if my grandmother established the business and gave it to my

grandfather, I'm not sure. All I know is that if he would have run it, it would have failed.

Glaser: I get the sense of a man who was overwhelmed by the transition from Russia to America.

Lurie: That was my sense, that this guy never found himself. I'm not sure that he ever had. For all I know, he was like this in Russia. But when I caught up with him, this man was basically incompetent. A wonderful guy and I didn't think of him as incompetent. One of the visions I have of my grandfather is that I remember that he drove terribly. He never learned that you should not use both feet to drive. He would use both and when he would get confused--you know, brake, gas, brake--it was horrible. [laughter]

I saw him one time drive into our driveway on Euclid Heights Boulevard--I must have been no more than eight--he cut off two people. There was a guy who followed him into the driveway; he was so angry with him for cutting him off. My mother, who was a lioness--my mother was very much like her mother, a very powerful woman--began to attack the man, screaming at him, and when he went towards my grandfather, she began to hit him. Now, my grandfather was one hundred percent wrong. I don't have any idea what this guy was going to do or not do; maybe he was just going to scream at him. But she would not let him get near my grandfather. Normally, if a child of yours would be doing this, you would say, "Rita, stop it." He didn't say a word. He just stayed in his car.

Glaser: Did everybody protect him that way? All the children and all the nephews?

Lurie: I guess so. Again, you sort of think of, the way I'm describing him, as some kind of distant figure, some person removed from reality. That wasn't the case. He had a real presence; he was really there. He was very real to me because, first of all, he smelled. My grandfather took a bath once a month, and Osna used to yell at him that he smelled and that he had to take a bath. He would say, "I just took one two weeks ago." His pungent aroma--it wasn't awful, but he had a smell, a presence, a reality. He was a person, a real person.

Glaser: When you told me the name 'Osna,' I thought that that was the grandfather's name, but that's the grandmother's name.

Lurie: That's the grandmother's name.

Glaser: I interrupted you when you started to tell me about your grandmother's sense of humor.

Lurie: She just could laugh. I would tell her something funny, that she would think was funny--maybe it really wasn't--and she would laugh and laugh and cry from laughter.

Glaser: So you got a lot of response from her whereas you didn't from your grandfather?

Lurie: I got a total response. I was very close to her; I was as close to her as I was to my parents.

Glaser: Why did it take so long before your parents got a home of their own and moved away?

Lurie: Well, I think there were several reasons. One reason was that it was financially a lot cheaper to live in this house, which cost at that time only \$25,000.

Glaser: That was a lot of money then.

Lurie: I might be high, but I sort of remember \$25,000. Maybe I'm wrong about that. I probably must be wrong, come to think of it. It doesn't sound right. You're right; it's too much money. Anyhow, it was very inexpensive to have both families living together.

Glaser: What area of Cleveland was this?

Lurie: This was Cleveland Heights. When my parents finally moved, I remember that the house that they bought cost \$70,000, which was a lot of money. But my father was a successful businessman. The money was, I'm sure, an issue for him because he was frugal. He wanted to save and put it into the buying of real estate, stuff like that. I think he was comfortable. First, they could go out any time they wanted; they had built-in baby sitters. That was nice. The kids loved it. What was bad about it, his wife did not like it. That was the bad thing. That's why we ended up moving: not because of us.

Parents' Interests

Glaser: What were your mother's interests?

Lurie: Well, she was very active with us. She was very involved in the PTA all the way through. She was an athletic woman; she was a fine swimmer. Before she married my father, she rode a lot; but then she stopped doing that because he didn't like it. She had broken her arm, she had been thrown, and he was frightened of animals.

My father was more of a prissy type. I don't know exactly how that is. I don't want to characterize him as effeminate, but he had probably a more highly developed feminine quality than most men of his time without being a homosexual. He loved dandy-type clothes and liked jewelry. He was an actor; he was a good actor. He was in college repertory theater; he had done acting. He sang light opera. He had that piece to him which was a little bit unusual for that time.

Glaser: Did he do any of this after college?

Lurie: I'm not sure. He did theatrical stuff, but not of that magnitude, afterwards. I remember going through his clippings, about how he did in his various college plays.

II JEWISH OBSERVANCE

Temple Affiliation

Glaser: What was the Jewish community of Cleveland like when you were growing up?

Lurie: Let me go back. You asked a question about Judaism in the household.

Glaser: Yes.

Lurie: Judaism in the household was primarily what my grandparents put into it, not my parents. My parents were more interested in assimilating, which is understandable. They were first generation in this country because they were both born some place else. My grandparents, though not Orthodox, were traditional; they belonged to a Conservative synagogue while we belonged to a Reform synagogue. Here you were living in one house, the older belong to Conservative, the younger belong to Reform, which was an interesting dynamic. Passover we would have to change dishes, we would hunt for the humetz, the bread.

We weren't kosher but we didn't have any traif [not kosher] in the house. We didn't eat off of two sets of dishes normally for milk and meat, but there was a presence there of traditionalism because of my grandparents. Sometimes I would go to their synagogue, and it was just like a foreign experience because it was so different from our synagogue. It was so Hebraified and so not of my comprehension.

Glaser: Then I take it that you did not go to cheder [Hebrew School]?

Lurie: No. Absolutely not. I wasn't even bar mitzvahed.

Glaser: Really?

Lurie: That had to do with the congregation that we belonged to; though my father was not a religious person and my mother was really both atheist and a Canaanite. My mother was a very earthy woman.

Glaser: What do you mean?

Lurie: A Canaanite is somebody in historical terms that is a lover of land. There is a feeling that a lot of Jews living in Israel today, whose worshipping of the land in the kibbutz--you know, farmers once again. They say they're Canaanites. That's sort of an interesting expression used in Israel.

Glaser: I never heard that.

Lurie: So my mother was a bit of a Canaanite. She loved the earth. She liked nothing better to do than plant. If you asked what she did, she loved to plant; she loved to harvest. She loved the earth. And she was an earthy woman.

Glaser: It sounds as if your mother was rural and your father urban.

Lurie: That's correct. Although I don't want to take something away from my father; he had many strengths. But my mother was a far more powerful presence. If you wanted to be frightened of somebody, you better be frightened of my mother. Just like my grandmother was the powerful one. My father was smarter; I think he had more intelligence and obviously he was better trained, although my mother also was a college graduate. They met at Western Reserve. At that time my mother, to have graduated as a social worker at Western Reserve, was interesting.

Glaser: Did she work at it?

Lurie: She worked in a settlement house with my father.

Glaser: With your father?

Lurie: Yes, he also worked there. He had to work his way through law school because he had no money. He did all kinds of jobs, and I think that this was just one of them.

Glaser: You were not that involved, in your early years, with the Jewish community as such?

Lurie: No, now I'll tell you about it. Cleveland, up until recently, has been the paragon of outstanding Jewish community organization. There is probably no community historically that has done a better job as a community building Jewish infrastructure and building a federation-type community. Detroit is very good as well, but Cleveland is probably the best. I didn't know anything about that

whole system growing up in Cleveland. I only knew one personality and one reality and that was my temple. My rabbi was Abba Hillel Silver.

Glaser: You go for the best.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

Lurie: Rabbi Silver was the biggest. He looked like that guy over there. [points to photograph on the wall] Prophetic, powerful, and I have lots of images of him. My father worshipped him. Worshipped him. My father never got what Silver was really saying. When I say "got", I mean Silver was the Zionist of his time--the Abba Eban and everything else rolled into one. My father, until I lived in Israel, never visited Israel. So he hardly was a disciple of Silver; he would not have thought about it that way, although Silver didn't talk that much about Israel in his own congregation. He was interesting, an interesting man.

Anyhow, Silver I remember a lot. Not so much what he said as, again, his presence. By the way, I believe even when you are older and you go to university, it isn't so much what they teach you but the sense that the teacher gives. Whether the love of learning or the display of self or there is something unusual about the man or the woman who is teaching you, that is much more important than the subject.

Glaser: You're talking about inspiration, aren't you?

Lurie: I am talking about inspiration; I'm also talking about quality. When you are exposed to quality people, something in you can resonate to that. If you are exposed to pedestrian people, what role models are you given to be any better? So a teacher for me was always somebody that I would aspire to be like or to reach up to, almost like the Aristotelian concept of the "unmoved mover".

That's the God concept. The God couldn't care less what you do, but you aspire because of seeing perfection. You aspire to be like that perfection. That's why it's called the unmoved mover. Teachers are obviously more involved than that, but in many ways I don't think most teachers can understand what I'm saying. They don't understand now what I am saying, that it isn't so much how they reach out to the student. It isn't so much what they impart to them in testing and knowledge and whatever. It is the way that they project themselves as human beings--the quality of their presentation, the largeness of their vision, whether the student understands or not.

Glaser: Well, tell me what you understood at your early age.

Lurie: Powerful presence. Dominant force. Intellectually alive.

Glaser: How much contact did you have with Rabbi Silver?

Lurie: Well, I probably saw him every week for a number of years because he would give sermons, and we were ushered in to listen to the sermons. I didn't understand him. He spoke on Sunday mornings to our Sunday school. I shouldn't say every week, it might have been only every other week; it might even have been as few as once a month. But I remember going always to hear him. This must have been for eight or nine years, maybe ten years, where I went that often, listening to him give sermons. I don't remember one of his sermons. I have no idea what this man said. But I remember his presence.

Glaser: Was he a spellbinder for the rest of the congregation, as he obviously was for you?

Lurie: He was a great orator. Oh, yes. I learned a lot more about him later, as far as cognitive information, after he had died. His son Danny and I were friends, and unfortunately he just died.

Glaser: His full name was Daniel?

Lurie: Daniel Jeremy Silver. Daniel Jeremy Silver worshipped his father. In the summer time, a couple of years, I worked at my temple. It was sort of as an internship; I'd just help out there. Actually, they were helping me out; I don't think I was really helping them out. One time I asked Danny how he could come back to this congregation, because his father was such a commanding presence. He had been a head rabbi at another temple. He said, "I wanted to come back to the best congregation, and this is the best congregation because God, I mean, my father is here."

Glaser: That's something to live up to, isn't it? You didn't tell me the name of the congregation.

Lurie: Well, of course it was called The Temple.

Glaser: It must have had a name.

Lurie: That was the name of it. The Temple. Or it was called "Silver's Temple." I don't know if you are aware that he wrote seven books. He was a great scholar, great orator. His wife referred to him as Dr. Silver or Rabbi Silver. People were frightened of this man. He had such power. I guess awe is close to fear. In Hebrew, the word Norrah, which means awe-inspiring also means fearful. I was filled with awe of the man.

I remember one time he came into an assembly and I was the youngest. I was afraid of this place; the place scared me, the temple scared me. It was five miles from my home; I didn't know how to get home and I thought my parents were trying to get rid of me by taking me there. I just really was an insecure young man. In fact, my teachers used to give me their pocketbooks to hold if they ever left the room. So that would be my little blanket [laughter], knowing that if they gave me their pocketbook they would have to return.

One time, I guess I was in kindergarten or early first grade, Silver came in to address just the children. It was huge; there must have been 2,000 children. This is bigger than anything we've ever had here, as far as congregations go. Much bigger than Emanu-El--on the order but much bigger. We had confirmation classes of three hundred. That's just unheard of for a place out here. I think the largest I ever had at Emanu-El was maybe one hundred or one hundred and twenty or something; but three hundred or two hundred and eighty or something--I think mine was two hundred and fifty when I was confirmed. Enormous. At least, this is my recollection. Very big, so a couple thousand kids easily in the religious school.

He came in to address them. His body was right up against mine. I was this little kid that came up to here [motions to his waist] on him probably. I remember his standing over me and putting his hands on my shoulders as he spoke. I was frozen, frozen! It was like I was a little peanut. That was the closest I ever got to him, physically, where he had his hands on me for about, I don't know, maybe a minute, maybe ten minutes. I have no idea what the time was.

I've had an unusual relationship with the family. If you could talk to Rabbi Hillel Silver, he would say, "Brian who?" He would have no idea who I was. None. I'm certain. My father was active in the congregation so, "Lawrence Lurie." "Oh, yes, Lawrence--." So there was nothing. Danny and I had a relationship. It was through Danny that I began to understand who Silver really was and what he meant to the State of Israel and his disappointments and what he was as a father. It's interesting.

We didn't stay in close contact. Danny got a Ph.D. and was a very intellectual man himself, like his father was. We didn't really stay in close contact, but when he died I was on one of my trips to Israel and his wife called me.

Glaser: You're talking about Danny now?

Lurie: The son. Adele called me, and I always thought Adele was one of the most beautiful women in the world. She wasn't physically beautiful, although she's not unattractive, but whenever I would meet her I would say, "Now, why did I think she was the most beautiful woman in the world?" Then I would spend five minutes with her and she was beautiful. She had such a personality and such an intellect. She was one of the most remarkable women I've ever met. In any case, when he died she called me. I hadn't talked to her in several years. She just wanted to talk to me. So there was some kind of a tie that I had through that family--it's somewhat mystical. So I can't give you any dot along the way. Whenever I would come home from college--this is as an undergraduate; this isn't rabbinical school--I would go and talk.

##

Lurie: We ended up being friends. Danny was my teacher, my rabbi. He was also the rabbi when I was going to a more advanced part. I think when I got into junior or high school at the temple, he became the associate rabbi there. His father died on a Saturday, and I can tell you exactly when he died in 1963. It was November, right after Kennedy was assassinated. He wrote a sermon on Kennedy, which I have read, which he never delivered. He gave his sermons on Sunday and he died on Saturday. So someone else read the sermon that he had prepared.

Now, influences--what he taught me, not first-hand but second-hand, is to respect your audience. He used to spend one hour for every minute he spoke in preparation. One hour. And he used to speak for forty to forty-five minutes. He spent forty hours a week on his sermons. Incredible. I think the guy worked eighty/ninety-hour-weeks. But he took that sermon so seriously because, you have to remember, for a while that's all he did with the congregation. From 1943-48, he was the head of--I think it was called the Zionist Action or Zionist Emergency Council, which was housed in Washington, D.C. It was the lobbyist arm for the creation of the State of Israel. He was the head of it. So all week he would be in New York or Washington, and he would come home on Saturday night to give his Sunday morning sermon. That's the only time he was in town for five years.

Glaser: He was not really a congregational type of rabbi.

Lurie: There are no other Hillel Silvers today--there can't be. Congregations won't let them get away with it. He was not a pastor; he didn't even know what being a pastor was all about. At least this is my interpretation of the man. Obviously, if he was away for five years leading the Zionist movement in America with Steven S. Wise, he was not a congregational rabbi in the sense we understand it today. He was a national figure and he was the head

of national organizations. He was one of the founders of national United Jewish Appeal. He was a giant, and you can't be a giant from the pulpit. There you can be a giant to families and to building family, but you can't be a national figure like he was, an international figure like he was. Those opportunities don't exist.

Cleveland

Glaser: I would like to ask you about Cleveland, the Jewish part of Cleveland, because it's usually number one as far as federations are concerned. Was there a ghettoization of the community when you were there?

Lurie: It's an interesting question, and I often wonder why it was exactly the way it was. I had actually no insight into the Federation at all when I was living in Cleveland. The Jewish world that I related to was the synagogue. The Federation did not exist. My father gave an annual gift to the Federation, but I was never involved. I didn't know anything about it, I didn't know the executives, I didn't know anything. It was only when I came into the Federation field, the UJA Federation field, that I realized that Cleveland was this kind of community that you talked about. Remember, I talked about how important Abba Hillel Silver was, and he created a world unto himself.

Glaser: Well, aside from the Federation, was there what I termed the ghettoization of Cleveland?

Lurie: In every major city--you know this, Eleanor--there are Jewish neighborhoods, except San Francisco. We're the exception of any major metropolitan area, urban area. Even Los Angeles has huge Jewish neighborhoods, huge Jewish concentrations. We're no more than 10 percent of the population any place within the Bay Area. I think Berkeley maybe is that most heavily Jewish populated area within the Bay Area. Palo Alto is largest in the West Bay Federation and has got about 10 percent. Marin County has 8 percent, but it is scattered. There is no such thing as a Jewish neighborhood. In Cleveland--Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights--they were 60, 70, 80 percent Jewish neighborhoods. So you had tremendous ghettoization.

Glaser: So you see this as revolving around the different synagogues?

Lurie: But I wasn't really involved in the Jewish community in Cleveland, except getting religious training. Since I never really went

beyond high school there, I just wasn't aware of the Jewish infrastructure.

III THE YOUTHFUL YEARS

High Expectations of Parents

Glaser: I want to go back chronologically and ask you what kind of a kid were you?

Lurie: What kind of a kid was I? I was raised in a fairly strict way. Both my mother and father were fairly strict and were very demanding, especially my mother. My mother used to study with me and drill me for tests. I mean, drill! To the point that I would weep because she would be so insistent. If I made a mistake, I got so frustrated and so upset; she would just keep on going. So, tight control.

I was expected to earn money, and I had a lawn mowing and leaf raking and snow shoveling route as a child. As a child, I'm talking about. Six, seven, eight years of age, ten. I bought my own lawn mower and did my neighbors' lawns, et cetera. Very responsible. Good student. Basically got all A's in elementary school. Was the best athlete in the school. So I was one of these wonderful children. Early bloomer; at the age of four I could swim a half of a mile.

Glaser: Were you ever rebellious?

Physical Ability

Lurie: We haven't gotten there yet. I was tough and would like to get into fights. There was one kid who came from Bellefair--Bellefair was and still is the child care home for the Jewish community in Cleveland. At Bellefair there was a--what was his name? I can't remember his name. Anyhow, this one kid challenged me. He wanted to know who the toughest kid was, and I was the toughest kid so he challenged me to a fight. I got into a fight with him, and it was the only time that I can remember losing a fight in my life.

Anyhow, I stopped fighting after the sixth grade, so it wasn't like I got into so many fights. As a grown-up, none virtually. But he beat the hell out of me. He was so much stronger than I. I was shocked. I remember that my reaction was the same kind of reaction when somebody who doesn't think he can ever be hurt gets hurt. Like, "It's happened to me." That stunned reaction. "My God, this guy is stronger than I!"

Glaser: And, "I'm vulnerable."

Lurie: Exactly. So that happened, I think, in the second grade. What happened was starting in sixth grade kids started catching up to me physically. Up until then you throw me the football and I could literally dodge and dance my way down field without anyone tagging me because I was faster than anybody else and was more adroit as far as movement. By the sixth grade there were kids that were as fast as I, and by the seventh grade I was no longer anywhere near the fastest or the strongest kid in the class. I was a good athlete, but I was not a superior athlete like I was early on. So, I was an early bloomer, and I think it had a lot to do with opportunity. I grew up where my parents had me swimming at a very early age. I think I was swimming at the age of two. I was advanced. I was physically advanced.

There was very little intellectual stimulation in my home, surprisingly. We didn't have discussions as I remember this. But maybe we did; this is unclear to me because I remember sitting around the table. We must have talked about something. We always had family meals together. My parents did not eat separately; the six of us would eat: my sister, my father and my mother, my grandparents, and myself. Something must have been discussed. For the life of me, I don't remember what.

You asked me what kind of a child was I. I told you that my father had this unusual side to him, but that was for him. For me, he was very straight and narrow. He didn't like to talk about anything controversial and things had to be just so and he was somewhat finicky. So I got a mixed message. On the one hand he was this actor type; on the other hand you had to toe the line, and if I got out of line he would grab my knee or give me a patsch [slap], or whatever.

There were two turning points as far as events with both of my parents--well, there were several. Event number one when I must have been no more than eleven, ten, maybe as old as twelve, and my mother and my sister and my sister's friend and I were on the beach at Cedar Point. We had a cottage at Cedar Point, which is on Lake Erie. It was sort of a coldish stormy day and my mother said to me, "Don't get wet." So I proceeded to go, and I

was showing off to my sister's girlfriend, who I think I had a little crush on, and I didn't get wet; I got soaked.

I came back and my mother was filled with rage. She watched me just flaunt her wishes. She began to hit me with open hands, whacking me on the shoulders and the face. I was at that time as big or bigger than she, so I must have been twelve. I began to laugh and it just furthered her rage. I just laughed. I remember that as sort of like the turning point of my fear of my mother. That was the end of it. I am not saying she was wrong; she had every right to hit me. I had been an awful child.

Basically, all the way through primary and secondary and high school, I was a good child--good grades, good athlete. Not a great athlete, good athlete. I played on the basketball team, played on the football team. Because I am saying not a great athlete but a good athlete, you can pick up there in the way that it is said that there is a regret. If I have a wish, it is that I would have been a great athlete. Not that I would ever have played professional sports. In fact, I was recently stopped in downtown San Francisco by--I think it was Channel 5. They asked me the question, "If you could be the greatest quarterback in the history of football and make millions of dollars a year, but you, at the end of your career, would have some disability, would you want to change places and be that football player?"

I happened to have played quarterback when I played football, and I think Montana is one of the most gifted, unusual athletes the world has ever seen. My answer to them was absolutely not. So they said, "You didn't understand." And they went through it again. I said, "No, no, you don't understand. I love what I do. I have no desire to change at all." Which is true. So, though it is a regret from my youth, it is absolutely of no concern as an adult. As a young person, I just was that notch below really being good.

Shaker Heights High School

Glaser: What schools did you attend?

Lurie: I went to Boulevard Elementary, Roosevelt Junior High, and Shaker Heights High School. In high school I became my own person. I was not dominated in high school the way that I'm suggesting I was dominated both in elementary and in junior high school. Junior high there was seventh through ninth, a separate school. In high school there was no discussion about this but I basically did what I wanted. Which includes staying out all night in high school,

which is something I never have allowed nor will allow my children to do. But my parents, for some reason, accepted this behavior, which was totally atypical in their profile. I would go to these all night card games starting in the tenth grade. I was young.

Glaser: Were you a poker player?

Lurie: I played poker and I was the best poker player around. This was tenth grade when I was fifteen. I'm forty-eight so this was thirty-three years ago. So quite a few years ago I would come home on the average of winning about fifty dollars a night. Which was a lot of money then. And my mother--this is strange. I never quite understood and I even asked her finally many, many years later--. Money didn't mean anything to me. I couldn't care less; I loved winning. Not because I would do anything with the money, because all I would do is take the money home, put it in my drawer, and when the money would come to several hundred dollars my mother would take it and deposit it in the bank. She wouldn't ask me; she never asked me where it came from, and she never asked me what I wanted to do with it. She took it and put it in my bank account.

Glaser: Did she know without asking what was going on?

Lurie: Well, I suspect she did, but it was really bizarre. Think about it. How many children do you have?

Glaser: Two.

Lurie: If that ever happened wouldn't you say, "Where's this money coming from? What's going on?" This was a lot of money thirty-three years ago. It's like winning \$500, \$1,000 a night now. I don't know what the number is now.

Glaser: It sounds as if you're a very competitive person.

Lurie: I'm a very competitive person. I like to kid myself by saying I'm a quiet zealot. I used to have the conversation with [Rabbi] Pinchas Lipner. Pinchas is a noisy zealot. I said, "Pinchas, the only difference between you and me is not whether you're Orthodox and I'm Reform; or I'm liberal and you're conservative. The difference is that I'm quiet about my being a zealot, and you're noisy."

What's a zealot? A zealot is one who believes overwhelmingly in something, is committed to that in a very passionate way. I am.

Glaser: At that time you were committed to poker [laughter].

Lurie: No, I was committed to winning. Poker didn't mean a damn to me. In fact, when I started really working hard--I had a job matching plaids one summer in my high school years in a dress factory. You had to work over this loom with these spikes on it, and you had to take these heavy rolls of cloth and put it on the loom. Then you would spread it out manually and press it on the loom and your fingers would be stabbed by the spikes if you missed where you were pressing. I did this hour after hour, day after day.

I stopped playing poker. I could not stand the thought that I would make twelve dollars a day, or something like that. The idea that I could lose a week's wages or win a week's wages in one night at a poker table--I couldn't play any more. It made me sick, because then the value of the money became real to me. Up until then it didn't mean anything.

Glaser: What kind of courses did you take in high school?

Lurie: It was general studies. My best subjects were history and math. I was in advanced placement class in math. In fact my SATs, whenever I would take any kind of testing I was always much stronger on the mathematics section rather than the verbal section. It's a rather odd choice that I still can look at a line of numbers and realize when something is wrong almost intuitively. That's not a rabbinic trait.

Glaser: You are a very complex man, with a complex background. Lots of mosaic pieces to you.

Lurie: I don't consider it at all unusual. I consider my upbringing actually quite normal. My parents were really very solid, by-and-large healthy, loving parents that I really felt were very generous to me in their love and their support. It's only in the telling that it becomes somewhat more complicated. I really like to think that I can do complex things now because I really came from a very simple background. I can take a great deal of pressure now, and I'm free to fly because I was so well-rooted.

Relationship with Sister

Glaser: One thing you haven't talked about it is the relationship with your sister.

Lurie: The reason for it is that I was not conscious of the relationship when I was growing up. It has become an important relationship now, since my mother became very ill and since, also, my sister got divorced from her first husband. First of all, she was three

years older but four years older as far as school. So except for elementary school, whenever she was in one school I was in another. She was finished with college before I began college, and so she was always that much further. She got married when she finished college, I think, at nineteen. She's very smart and accelerated because she wanted to get married, wanted to finish college.

She was a higher achiever than I. She had a better record. She got into a better university than I did. When she went to the university, she went to Brandeis; then she transferred back to what was then Case Western Reserve, where she did graduate. She got a master's in English lit from Tufts. She was accomplished, academically. I don't think she ever got anything less than A's and B's. My grades the first two years in college were really mediocre. I don't think she ever had mediocre grades.

Glaser: Did you go to Case?

Lurie: No, no. I went to Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. So, my sister was older; I would basically relate to her boyfriends as the pest. Either they would try to win me with buying me off or abusing me to get me out of the way. That was my relationship; I was a nuisance, a younger brother nuisance type. At our cottage at Cedar Point, her boyfriends would bury me in the sand so that they could be away from me, and then refuse to dig me up. Maybe we'll get to it, maybe we won't.

My sister and I are very close. We just rented a house at Stinson Beach, and she and her boyfriend came and joined us for the three days that we were there. We have a closeness now that we never had before. My parents are both dead, and though we have cousins and whatever, we really only have each other from our family. I worry about my sister. I worry about her. I was very lucky in my life, and I don't think she was quite so lucky. It was much harder for my sister growing up in the house. I didn't know it growing up there, because I really didn't know what she was or wasn't getting from my parents, but they were much harder on her. My mother was very demanding, as I told you. Where with my mother I would cry and be angry, it didn't scar me. My sister was scarred from experiences with my mother.

IV COLLEGE, 1960-1964

Lafayette College

Lurie: I went to Lafayette College, which was not by choice. I applied to three schools, and Shaker was at that time, and I think still is, considered quite a good high school. At that time it was one of the best ten public high schools in the country. So it was no different than going to University High School here, where you apply to colleges and you know where you are going to get in because of the relationship. They know what the grades mean and they know the academic training you have. So it was with Shaker. We had a guidance counselor, because 90-plus percent of the high school graduates went on to college there. My first choice was Brown, my second choice was Brandeis, and my safety school was Tufts. Those were the three schools I applied to. There were, I think, five people at Shaker that applied to Brown. None of us got in.

Brown had a nice relationship with Shaker, but the year before everybody that had used Brown as a safety school had ended up going to Harvard or Yale or Princeton, whatever. So they took nobody; they wanted to show Shaker something. I got onto the waiting list at Brandeis. Tufts, I think, also rejected everybody that applied for the same reason that Brown did. Because they were angry; they knew that they were being used as a last choice category.

So here I was, only accepted on the waiting list. It was sort of a shock. I had close to a B+ average, had done fairly well on the boards. I did well on the math and mediocre on the English part. On the other scores it was all right. They were not the reasons why I did or did not get in. It had more to do with the politics of the school. So the school took about five of us that all fell into that same kind of situation, that were good students, and en bloc got all of us into Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. It was a notch below Ivy, but it was sort of that type of school: small, fourteen hundred, all male. I

never would have chosen to go there if I would have gone through the choice process, but this was no longer a choice.

There was another bloc of students--I'm sort of sorry I wasn't in that bloc--that were not as good. They were sort of like lower B's, C+ types, and they all got into Tulane. Those were the two schools that all it took was a phone call. I didn't even apply. It was all done through the school. So I went to Lafayette, and there I rebelled. Sure there is in loco parentis, where the school takes over some of the responsibilities of the parents, but I basically exalted in my freedom. I didn't miss my parents at all. I had gone to camp and never even wrote home. I just loved the freedom, just loved it. But I didn't know what I was doing half the time either. So it wasn't freedom that was done in a sensible way; it was freedom done in a rebellious way.

Wild Behavior

Lurie: I got into a fair amount of trouble in drinking and wildness of various kinds. So much so that fifteen of us from this freshman class ended up getting, at the end of the year, into a terrible brawl with the townspeople of Easton, Pennsylvania, where eleven of the fifteen were thrown out of school. I was one of the four that was not thrown out, although I happened to be the ringleader of the group. If anybody really had responsibility for starting the fight, it was I. I basically told the truth in the letter to the dean explaining my role. But my grades were better, although they were mediocre, but just in comparison to the rest of the group. For some reason--I'm not sure why to this day--I was put on disciplinary probation for a full year, which was the most severe thing you could be on.

They thought of me as such a threat, they wanted me off of campus. Imagine this. So I had to live in an apartment off campus, which was unheard of for a sophomore.

Glaser: But more freedom [laughter].

Lurie: Punish me, punish me, really give me something terrible like freedom from campus. In dormitories you have rules, no girls. I lived on my own, but there were no rules. So that was my punishment. We have to come back because there was an element in there that was very important to becoming a rabbi.

I came home from this debacle, where I still didn't know if I was going to be thrown out of school or not. I proceeded to get drunk with a couple of my friends and went to what is one of the

major delis in Cleveland. Absolutely drunk out of my mind, I kicked in the front door of the restaurant. Police were called and it was a mess. This was while waiting to find out whether I'm going to be kicked out of school or not. Here I come back to Cleveland and continue with the same kind of juvenile behavior. Which I am smiling at right now because everybody does rebel at a moment in time. The question is what kind of form does it take and how long does it last. That was basically the end of it.

Glaser: Your parents must have been so shocked by all of this.

Lurie: They didn't know what to do with it. They absolutely had no idea what to do with me. How are they going to punish me--send me to my room? It didn't mean anything anymore. I remember that I realized that I had gone as far as I should go, after kicking in this door. I said to myself, "You know, it's enough. Just enough. You have to get a hold of yourself. This is getting dangerous." It isn't that I didn't get into any kind of troubling things after that. I did, but nothing like this. It was pranksterism. It wasn't wild without thought.

Glaser: Did you go off to Lafayette knowing what you wanted to major in?

Lurie: No, but I went off to Lafayette having the most impressive and formative person in my mind being Abba Hillel Silver. There was nobody that could touch him. I had one high school teacher who was a history teacher, who was an unusual man. He was hated by the principal. I think he tried to form a union there; I'm not sure about this. His name was Dixon. I always got A's in his class. I liked him. He had an unusual mind and there was something perverse about him. He was a troublemaker in the school. He used to refer to athletes as latent homosexuals.

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Lurie: Dixon was the only high school teacher I can remember that had any kind of impression on me, with exception of Abba Hillel Silver, who was obviously my rabbi.

Influence of Professors

Lurie: When I went to college, there were two professors--three, really, all together. But two in my freshman year had tremendous impact on me. The first was a fellow by the name of Paul Younger. Paul Younger was the proctor in my dorm. He had studied at Princeton, getting eventually a Ph.D. in religion. He was a minister and he had lived in India and was in the process of getting ready to

marry an Indian woman. And we became friends. First he was my proctor, and then I majored in religion and I took courses from him. I went to visit him when he moved to Princeton and was a professor there. I admired him. There was something kind and wonderful and alive about him that struck me as significant. He was a Christian, obviously, but Christian with tremendous awareness of other religions and sympathy for other religions of the world and for other cultures, which made an enormous impression on me. He was in my freshman year.

In my sophomore year, I believe, there were two professors. It might have been junior for one of them, but I think both in my sophomore year. One was Ernest Best, another professor of religion, another minister. Younger had spent a great deal of time in India, married an Indian woman, and Best had met his wife in Japan. He had gone to minister either in Nagasaki or in Hiroshima after the bomb blast and spent many, many years in Japan. So he too, though he was a minister and a lover of Christianity, brought an international world view, love of Shintoism and Buddhism and whatever, to me. It stays with me to this day.

The other professor that influenced me there was a fellow by the name of Tucker, who was the definitive biographer of Alexander Hamilton. The Hamilton papers, he's the guy that's written them. There are twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five volumes. It's a major production. He was a true intellectual. I began to hang out at his house; he lived up on the hill very close to where my apartment was. He and I became friends. I used to just spend time with his wife and have dinner at his house. The same thing with Best, the same thing with Younger. They were my friends; they were my teachers; they were people that I had great admiration for.

Now, Tucker was not a religious person, but his intellectual curiosity was what I loved about him.

Glaser: Did your being Jewish make any difference to these people?

Lurie: No, none. Absolutely none. In fact, I became a religion major in a Presbyterian school. I'm probably the first rabbi that has ever graduated as a religion major in the school, although I don't know that.

Glaser: So it was their influence that made you--?

Lurie: It was absolutely their influence. So you couple their influence with this formidable Silver. This presence. Now, it was obvious that I wasn't going to become a minister, so the thought of becoming a rabbi came. I probably even played with it in high

school because Silver was, as I said, such a world-class figure. But it was really only there that I began to really think about it.

Rabbinical Qualities

Lurie: But my thought about it was interesting. I held it all the way through rabbinical school. I never thought I was good enough to be rabbi. Not smart but good enough good--soul, correct, right, honest.

Glaser: Did you feel rabbis had to be saintly?

Lurie: I thought that they had to be perfect. I remember that in my first year of rabbinical school I became infatuated and then, finally, at the end of that first year engaged to a woman by the name of Donna Romer. One of the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life. In fact, I used to think when we had fights, "How am I going to live with her? At least, I could always look at her." She was that beautiful. She had a brain; she had a very big brain. She was a very bright, articulate woman. But I was way, way too young to ever get married at that time and the relationship dissipated.

When the engagement finally broke, I went to see Sam Sandmel, who was the dean of Hebrew Union College. Sitting in one of his old chairs in his old house not far from the Cincinnati campus of HUC, I said to him, "I have to leave rabbinical school. I'm just not good enough to be here. Look what a mess I've made of my life." I remember Sandmel saying to me, "You're not leaving." I said, "No, no..." He said, "No, no. You're not leaving. You want a week, you take a week off. You want two weeks, you take two weeks off. But you're not leaving." He didn't say anything else to me. He didn't argue with me. He didn't get into "Oh, Brian, everybody goes through this." He said, "You're not leaving."

Glaser: He told you.

Lurie: Yes. Which, by the way, is very interesting. That's probably what most people really need. All this psychological 'figure stuff out'--my wife is a therapist; I believe in therapy and all the rest of it. Quite often in life when you come to these key moments what you need is somebody to say, "This is what you should be doing." Now, you need a piece of luck that they give you the right advice. The guy could have said to me, "You are leaving." Well, if I had left, God knows what I would have ended up doing.

But, "You're not leaving..." I was certain I was going to leave. I was all set to quit.

Glaser: At that point did this feeling of inadequacy leave you?

Lurie: No.

Glaser: You just lived with it?

Lurie: I just lived with it. Probably only now do I feel that I'm good enough to be a rabbi, simply because so many rabbis have feet of clay. I realize they are as human or more human than anybody else. So, big deal if you're a rabbi. All it means is that you know probably a bit more than somebody else about Judaism and the history of Judaism and the history of our people. It doesn't make you necessarily saintly at all. But I definitely had a different feeling at the time.

Glaser: Is there a selective factor in those who choose to become rabbis? The selective factor being that it gives you a center stage. The star aspect in relationship to one's congregation.

Lurie: I'm sure that was a motivating factor for me. I'm sure that was because, again, the role model was Silver. People not only listened to him, they worshipped him. That obviously had impact on me, and I felt to have that position you had to be terribly deserving. This is not something you got by birth or anything of the kind. You had to really be special. I didn't feel that I was that special then.

In looking at my colleagues, who were a real mixed bag--I think there were about twenty-five students that entered with me in Cincinnati in rabbinical school--I can't say honestly that any of them were like me or were motivated for the reasons that I was motivated. I think they had a love of Judaism; they had a positive role model as a rabbi, yes. None of them had a Silver. He was, at that time, the number one rabbinic figure in the country. They weren't dominant-type people. My rabbinical colleagues were basically good people. I used the words, "I wasn't good enough" to describe becoming a rabbi. A lot of them were good and good enough. They had qualities of caring, of sympathy, of loving kindness.

Glaser: Maybe it was the sowing of your wild oats that left you with that feeling of not being good enough.

Lurie: I don't know.

Delta Upsilon House

Glaser: We have to get you through Lafayette before you go on to Cincinnati. Tell me more about Lafayette.

Lurie: Rabbinical school required that you write some kind of essay. I titled the essay, "Wine, Women and Rebellion." That's sort of the way I looked at Lafayette College.

Glaser: What year were you in Lafayette when you did this?

Lurie: I was a senior when I wrote this. Living off campus, from then on I had a wonderful social life. I belonged to the Animal House, Delta Upsilon, which was the jock house. You remember I fancied myself an athlete, although I never quite measured up to the standard. I wish I could have. To be around athletes was something I was very comfortable with and enjoyed very much. The idea that before dinner you would get into a huge wrestling match was appealing to me all the way through college. This was the place where the wildest parties took place. In fact, the fraternity doesn't exist any more. They closed it because they continued their wild ways and the college finally clamped down and put them not only on disciplinary probation but put them out of existence.

So I lived off campus, had this wonderful social life at this wild fraternity house. It was my adjunct to partying, and the only position I ever aspired to there was to be the social director, which I was. I was only one of two or three Jews in the whole house. I made them wear tuxedos to a couple of parties. They thought I was absolutely mad, but they liked it. It was sort of funny, dressing up animals.

Glaser: Let me interject something. Did you experience any anti-Semitism at Lafayette?

Lurie: Some of my fraternal mates, or whatever, confreres there--

Glaser: Brothers?

Lurie: Brothers. Thank you. Some of my brothers were anti-Semitic. They were brought up that Jews had horns. They were from rural towns in Pennsylvania. They had never even seen a Jew before they came to Lafayette. Here I was, a Jew in their house. There were two other Jews, too. One was a championship rugby player and the other was a star on the tennis team. I was the only non-performing one as far as athletics at the house, and I was by far the oddest of the three. The other two guys fit in much more.

One of the guys did better than I did academically, but I was just different. I was clearly different.

Glaser: How come they accepted you? You had to be passed upon, didn't you?

Lurie: How did they accept me? Well, it was not easy. I'm almost got blackballed at the end of my freshman year when I borrowed a brother's car, and I was not yet initiated. You had to pledge for a full term and then you became initiated at the beginning of your sophomore year. You became a brother then.

Towards the end of my first year I borrowed a brother's car to take my date back to her college at the University of Delaware, which was about a two-and-a-half, three-hour drive. It was a long week and I had slept very little and drank way too much. But I was sober, driving the car, but I was tired. I was very tired. Driving her back was fine because she was entertaining me and so that was no problem.

Coming back I fell asleep at the wheel, literally. What woke me up was this red light. I didn't know where I was. I opened up my eyes and I was going about seventy-five, eighty miles an hour, and the police car was pulled up next to me with the red light, pulling me over for speeding. Which saved my life, obviously, because if he hadn't done that I would have crashed. I was out cold.

They pulled me into the police station and it turned out that the judge was a DU himself, so he let me go. I didn't have any money; I didn't have anything. He could have locked me up and kept me there. I arrived back, something like 6:00 in the morning. The brother whose car I had borrowed wasn't upset. But somebody said to me, "Why didn't you call?" I said, "I nearly died and I couldn't give a fuck what the brother has to say about it." This was when I was a freshman in college; I don't think I said four letter words then. I say four letter words now. Then there was almost like an inquisition; that I don't really care about the brotherhood and I am so disrespectful.

Well, my big brother was a significant guy at the fraternity. He really was a wonderful guy. He said, "I don't know if I can save you. There are a lot of people that really want you out of here, but I'll try." He was successful. But at the price where I was physically abused and mentally tortured for several months by the brothers--by not a whole bunch. I say physically abused, they were still paddling at that time, but they weren't supposed to. They gave me more whacks; they had me doing pushups. They had me doing all kinds of things to get even with me. During pledge week, which was the beginning of my sophomore

year, they were particularly cruel to me and made me do things that nobody else had to do.

Glaser: Why did you stay on?

Lurie: Because I'll be damned if I was going to let them intimidate me. It was my will against their will. They knew they couldn't break me. It got to a point where they had this grudging respect for me. Anything they gave, I just looked at them and I said, "Yes, sir."

Glaser: You make it sound as if you were a plebe at West Point.

Lurie: Well, it was like that. This was a real harassment. What I went through for the better part of three, four, five months, I can really understand what the cadets go through. Because that's what I went through. Any time they would see me on campus they would say, "Drop down and do twenty, thirty, forty pushups. Walk across the street. Don't come near me." The whole thing, "Who are you? You are lower than whale shit." This was standard operating procedure for this fraternity.

I have to say I wasn't the only one treated like this. I was just treated a little bit worse because there was a handful of them that really did want me out. I don't want to say it was anti-Semitic. It wasn't. I got to have a very influential role in the fraternity as I got more into it. Though people didn't understand me, everybody respected me in the house. Even though I wasn't an athlete like they were and wasn't as physically strong as some of them, they were a little afraid of me because I was different. They couldn't figure me out, but there was no anti-Semitism.

Glaser: Are you still in favor of fraternities?

Lurie: For me, it was good. I can see where it would have been disastrous for a lot of people. In fact, there were a couple of guys that pledged that I protected. They got less than I did but they wept. I would scream at the brothers that would attack these guys. I would say, "Leave them alone. Get the hell away from them. Deal with me. Leave them alone. Leave him alone." As I went up, I stopped all this from happening in the fraternity. None of this happened when I became a brother. I said, "This is not right. You are abusing people."

They stuck us in a bathroom the size of my secretary's office. That would be big. There were twenty-some of us in there, and we all had to smoke cigars and finish them. These were big stogies. We had people throwing up all over the place in there. It was unbelievable. They put us with eggs in each pocket

when we went into this room. Now, figure it was cramped like this. [laughter] So you had these broken yolks going down, smoke, the smell of eggs, kids puking. It was awful.

Glaser: That's a unique form of hazing.

Lurie: It was some perverse mind that did this. But we had none of that for any of the other classes afterwards.

Glaser: Oh, you really stopped it?

Lurie: Oh, I stopped it. I stopped it. I think it was good for me. You will find as we go along that there were a variety of things that have happened to me that weren't wonderful, but I think for me probably were very healthy. Because they gave me a negative experience and a taste of vulnerability and a tad of fear that made me, I don't want to say human, but rooted in reality. How's that? The world is not a fun place, and the world has got a lot of cruelty in it, and people are particularly cruel to one another in very strange ways. The Lord of the Flies I lived.

Glaser: It was a humanizing experience?

Lurie: Yes, very humanizing. I remember this fraternity; a lot of terrible things happened. It was violent. It was violent. I shudder to think my son being--. Although that's why he's gotten into some real things his freshman year that I sort of look at like minor league compared to what I got into.

Glaser: But through all of this you still kept the idea of going on to rabbinical school.

Lurie: Yes.

V HEBREW UNION COLLEGE, 1964-1969

Essays That Shocked

Glaser: What was the reaction on the part of the powers that be in Cincinnati to your paper on "Wine, Women, and Rebellion"?

Lurie: They thought it was bizarre. The same people who thought it was bizarre when they read the paper tried to get me thrown out of rabbinical school when I wrote a paper in my fourth year advocating the sanctioning of premarital intercourse.

Glaser: [laughter] Lurie the shocker.

Lurie: That just absolutely--they just couldn't believe this. First of all, I had premarital sex, so I could not be a hypocrite about it. But the other thing of it is I thought that in the sexual liberation that we had, the sexual freedom that we had, if the rabbi would simply condemn it, which is the posture that was being taken, that we could get no control of it. That the control of it had to be that you had to talk to young people about caring relationships. Sex within a caring relationship was all right. If you didn't want to do it, fine. But within a caring relationship you could sanctify it. That was the nature of the paper. So it wasn't just go off and do it; it was trying to get some--. Since everybody was doing it anyhow, rabbis sounded like fools, I felt. Talking like, "You can't do it; it's a sin." Nonsense! Now, in this day of AIDS and everything else, it's a different cup of tea again.

Anyhow, that was a shocking paper for the rabbinical school. The very fact that I would write something like this blew them away.

Glaser: But to go back to your first paper--.

Lurie: It bothered them. Who knows why they took me. The last two years I was at Lafayette I was on the dean's list. I was a very good student, and I had tremendous recommendations from these

ministers. They thought I was wonderful. I guess Hebrew Union College thought I wasn't a deviant, so they accepted me.

Glaser: What was your parents' reaction?

Lurie: My mother was awe-struck. She just couldn't believe I was going to rabbinical school. Remember, she was this earthy type who was an atheist. Judaism to her was somewhat of a joke, totally unimportant. My father was pleased as punch, as you would think he would be. But I wasn't doing it for my father at all. My father was not somebody I was trying to please. In fact, I never felt like I was trying to please my father. I always saw my father as the weaker of the two.

So if I wanted to please anybody it would be my mother. But, obviously I was going in the wrong direction. If I had gone and become a farmer, she probably would have thought that was terrific. Curiosity, probably, was the only other reaction she had.

My friends just couldn't believe it. At Lafayette I was really quite wild, so it was sort of like I was doing it as a lark. Doing it as a wild thing rather than as a reasonable thing.

Required Courses

Glaser: What were the courses you took?

Lurie: Where?

Glaser: At the rabbinical school, at Hebrew Union College.

Lurie: It's a varied curriculum. You have to master Hebrew and my Hebrew was non-existent when I began there. So you have to go to an intensive Hebrew session in the summer. I can't remember how many weeks that was. That's when I first began to have real back problems, when I used to sit and study for eight to ten, twelve hours a day.

Glaser: It was the sitting that caused back problems?

Lurie: It was the sitting. Well, sitting and whatever. Tension. I really worked. It was the hardest I had ever studied in my life. I realized that if I was at all serious I had to learn Hebrew. I was not a good language student. Never in high school or college did I do well in language studies. I studied German and French and I was a mediocre student at best. This was serious and I had

to learn it so I worked very hard. Hebrew, history, philosophy, theology, Aramaic. It was broad, a varied curriculum.

Professors were important at HUC [Hebrew Union College] but they were less important than experience. For me, that which made me what I am today, other than all those other influences of parents and background, whatever, was my experience living in Israel during '66-'67. That event was so powerful, so much a forming element in my life, that it is that which has carried me today and beyond. That's a whole chapter. That is very, very significant in every way. It was the catalyzing event in my life.

Glaser: Shall we pick that up next time?

Lurie: Yes, I think so.

Chug Ivri and the Year-in-Israel Program

[Interview 2: May 1, 1991] ##

Glaser: When you went to Cincinnati to Hebrew Union College, you formed a club to encourage speaking Hebrew.

Lurie: Remember that was only one reason for it. The real reason was to create a lobby for a year-in-Israel program.

Glaser: Did you form this club when you came back from your year in Israel?

Lurie: I formed the Chug Ivri along with some of my friends that were in Israel with me at the time. It had three stated purposes, but its real reason for being was to be a lobbying arm for a mandatory year-in-Israel program for all rabbinical students. The three overt reasons were to have a Hebrew-speaking club where you could speak Hebrew and continue the Hebrew language. The second reason was to encourage students to go on the year program, get them excited about spending a year in Israel. The third reason was to raise money to help those students go to Israel. Those were the three stated roles of the Chug Ivri. I would say it didn't take a great mind to realize the real agenda. I got the Cincinnati professors to give credits to students going to Israel to study on independent programs.

One of the problems of going to Israel was that it increased the number of years you had to spend at HUC; it was considered to be a lost year. You see, the normal Hebrew Union College program

was five years at the time. If you went to Israel, that made it six years. Now, I did it in five in spite of the year because I got credits over there. Plus I doubled up my last year; I compressed three years into two. I went through in five years: four in Cincinnati, one in Jerusalem. But that was very unusual.

Glaser: When the students went to Israel, did an entire class go?

Lurie: No. In my time it was from different years. In other words, there was no fixed agenda. It was considered to be just a throw-away year. I think we had seven, maybe eight people that went out of the whole rabbinical school. Of the eight people, one was from Los Angeles. Two or three were people who had difficulty in Hebrew, so they wanted to go there to help improve their Hebrew. They had failed an exam that qualified them to go on in rabbinical school. It was called a Bachelor of Hebrew Letters. If you didn't pass that at the end of your second year, you could not go on to a third year of study. For several of my classmates, that was the reason why they went there. There were a couple more of us, and then there were a couple of people that were older. So that was about seven or eight people. It was a catch-as-catch-can.

When we came back, what we did is we tried to lobby for whole classes to go, and the idea was eventually it would be required. We tried for the third year, figuring that would be the best year to get it. But what ended up happening is they created a year program the first year. That was done for several very good reasons. One reason is it's easier to learn Hebrew, if you don't know it, in Israel than it is in Cincinnati or New York or Los Angeles. Number two is it's cheaper. The older you are the more likely you are to be married and the potential of having children. So if they caught you your first year after undergraduate school, it would probably be the least expensive year to have a year program.

I would say that this Chug Ivri was successful. When you look at the way this was created, it was against the wishes of a number of the senior faculty and the president of the school. They were not interested in having a year program there.

Glaser: Who was the president at that time?

Lurie: Nelson Glueck. He overtly was in support of me and the Chug Ivri. In fact, he wrote a joint fundraising letter with me to the alumni of HUC. I signed it as the president of Chug Ivri and he signed it as the president of the university. We sent it out to all rabbis that graduated from HUC, asking for subvention money to help students going for a year study program. Which was nice, but covertly he didn't want the program to happen. I think I

mentioned to you that he had two lives. He had a life in Cincinnati and a life in Jerusalem. He didn't want a bunch of young rabbinical students screwing up his life in Jerusalem. That's really what he saw. It suited him to have a small group of people there.

Glaser: You also told me you raised money on your own for scholarships.

Lurie: I went out and solicited. I don't know what the dollar amount then was; it sounds so little, but I think something like \$2,200 or \$2,300 was what we raised the first year. Of which \$1,400 or \$1,500 came from rabbis from Cleveland, where I went back and solicited them face-to-face. It doesn't sound like much money, but it was four times the amount of subsidy the college was giving at the time. They gave one \$500 scholarship.

Glaser: That wouldn't go very far, even in those days.

Lurie: Actually, I got it. I can tell you it was very cheap going to Israel. I think the whole year cost about \$3,000, including transportation.

Glaser: Where did students stay?

Lurie: Almost all of us rented apartments. An apartment there cost me \$30 a month, where I shared it with three other students.

Glaser: Did you study at Hebrew Union College?

Lurie: I studied at Hebrew University and Hebrew Union College, both. I took independent courses where I got credit from professors back in Cincinnati. I set that up before I left. As I said, there were senior faculty against it; there were senior faculty that were very much for it. They were part of the Chug Ivri. We had a number of faculty members that were very active in that: Michael Meyer, who is a brilliant historian now; Jacob Petuchovsky; Stanley Chait. Those are the three that come to mind. Lew Barth is a fourth professor. Ezra Spicehandler was the head of the school at that time in Jerusalem and, obviously, he was very supportive. He was in Jerusalem, but he would help facilitate this credit situation.

We began to see numbers jump from seven, six, five students, which was the normal trend, to seventeen, to twenty-five, to thirty. We were a real pressure group. Students were coming from different years, and it sort of disrupted the flow of the curriculum within the school because our class only had twenty-five. If you had ten from one class and ten from another class and five from another, it just made everything chaotic. So it

forced the faculty. Plus back in the States we also created an overt lobby for this as well later on.

The New York school joined with the Cincinnati school in lobbying for the year program. There was a joint meeting of the students where we agreed upon this in principle. Actually we said that time it should be a first year. I was the one strongly committed to a third year, but I acquiesced in order to get unanimity on this among the students. A year after I was ordained the program came into effect.

VI ISRAEL, 1966-1967

The Impact of a Year in Israel

Glaser: Tell me about your year in Israel. What was the impact on you?

Lurie: Well, it was like I was looking for something; I found it. I went looking for something and I found it precisely. There is a temperament in Israel that suits me much more than in America. There is a certain brutal honesty, a certain vitality, a certain kind of living at the edge--a rawness, if you will. At that time a real lack of materialism, which has obviously changed, that was so appealing to me that to say I felt comfortable there was just an understatement. It was going home--I really felt at home. It was almost instantaneous. It did take me a week. The first week I was so shocked by the novelty of the place. I walked down the street with one of my friends who was finishing his year program, a fellow I had talked into going the year before. He had gone without me because I had decided I had to stay home for personal reasons. I kept on saying to him, "Boy, look at that! Look at it!" He said, "I live here. It's nothing. What are you looking at?"

The way people dress; the way the stores were; the smells. I was so overwhelmed with the difference when I first got there. I'll never forget it. In fact, we were walking down Rehov Jaffa. He had just met me at the airport and picked me up and was carrying my suitcase. I came with one suitcase for the year, that's all I had. I kid you not. If I spent \$3,000 in that year, it was a lot. That includes air fare; that includes everything. I think I had a \$300 air fare round trip because it was a subsidized air fare. I had a \$30 a month apartment. I spent a couple of dollars a day eating. It was dirt cheap. Since I didn't lose the year, it was cheaper than staying at HUC in Cincinnati, where everything was heavily subsidized. The whole year there cost maybe \$2,000. It was a very cheap year. Plus I got the \$500 scholarship. I was the king.

I dressed like a beggar. It was wonderful. I had borrowed shirts from somebody else because I didn't have enough warm clothes and I used to use those. I did my own laundry in the bathtub once a week, because at that time there were no washing machines there or dryers; that was unheard of.

Glaser: What year was that?

Lurie: 1966-67. Israel was poor then, really poor. Few cars, I went everywhere by bus or walked.

Glaser: They have a wonderful bus system. Were you there for the '67 war or had you come back?

Lurie: No. I was there. That's at the end of the story about my year.

Glaser: What were subjects you took?

Lurie: Archaeology was something I was seriously considering getting a Ph.D. in. I got into archaeology; I went on a dig at Gezer and I studied it. I discovered that they said that in Middle Iron Two there was no such thing as a burnished pot, and I found out, through exploring evidence, that they were wrong. Burnishing did, in fact, exist in Iron Age Two, and people had just looked at insufficient data to determine their findings. I'm talking about major archaeologists in Israel. It was very exciting. I am not a minutiae person. In fact, if you asked one hundred people I have worked with, "What is Brian's greatest shortcoming, 'He's lousy at detail.'" This is pure detail. To be a good archaeologist, you have to be so mired in detail. I loved it. I absolutely loved searching out for the burnished pot. And we're dealing with shards, not pots.

I studied archaeology. I studied with Yadin at Hebrew University. I studied with Bill Deaver, who was the head of Archaeology at that time at HUC. I took Modern Hebrew Poetry with Ezra Spicehandler. I audited courses. I got a liturgy course for credit. I worked it out through Petuchowsky that I could take that. I studied with the American Friends of the Hebrew University. I went to some of their programs because I was dating Mimi. In fact, the woman who eventually became my wife, Mimi, came over on that program.

Mimi Ruchwarger

Glaser: Did you meet Mimi in Israel?

Lurie: I met her in Israel. We had an Israel romance. She was a very big part of that year there. Really, truthfully, that is the reason I married her.

Glaser: What reason?

Lurie: Mimi and I had a lot of things in common, but I don't think I ever would have married her if we would have met in the States. But we met at almost the beginning of the year. At first we dated other people, then we just dated one another. We shared the year together, including the Six Day War. It was such a powerful experience that the idea of giving up the person you shared that experience with didn't seem to be possible.

Glaser: You said that she was on some program.

Lurie: She was on the American Friends of the Hebrew University Program. Obviously I was a bachelor and obviously my interest was meeting as many attractive single women as I possibly could. So what I did was I went to the American Friends of the Hebrew University office and said that I had relatives coming in on their program. I went there a couple of weeks before their program started. I went through the files of the hundred-plus students that were coming in, basically just looking at whether there were any women that were worthwhile meeting. I zeroed in on three women in the pictures. All three, in fact, were very attractive.

What I did is I went to Haifa with my friend Roy, who was still there, the one that met me at the plane. We spent the night in Haifa and then we went down to greet the Shalom, which was a major ship. Now it's owned by Germany. Israel sold it, but the Shalom at that time was their big ocean liner.

I watched this group come down the gangplank. I figured out two of the women that I was looking for. One of them was Mimi. Another was 5'11", so she was way too tall for me. The third, who might have been the cutest of all, had had her hair cut short, shorter than yours is right now. At that time it was a kind of hair cut that was totally unusual, so unusual that I didn't even look at her. I thought she was a boy.

So, it was only Mimi. What I did was I insinuated myself on the bus that she was on as soon as she got through customs. She thought I was an Israeli and she wanted to meet Israelis; that was one of her purposes in coming. And I wanted to meet her. We quickly bumped into each other on the bus; her design, my design. And we began to go out almost immediately.

Glaser: One would say you're goal-oriented.

Lurie: I'm very laser-like in everything I do. [Laughter]

Glaser: Where was Mimi from?

Lurie: Mimi is from Washington, D.C. Her parents had sent her on this program because she had a non-Jewish boyfriend. They wanted to break it up. Plus they were coming to live in Israel as well, for that period of time. Her father was taking a sabbatical; in fact, he always wanted to live in Israel. Both the mother and the father were refugees. They had come into the United States as one of a thousand people let in in Oswego, New York. There was this whole deal.

Glaser: Did they have to go through Canada before re-entering?

Lurie: I can't remember if they went through Canada, but they were sort of non-legal legal aliens living in America, let in in 1944 on a special act of Congress, then eventually allowed to become citizens thereafter. Where her parents had met was in an Italian concentration camp.

Glaser: Were they from Yugoslavia?

Lurie: They were from Yugoslavia originally. They escaped Yugoslavia, got caught by the Italians and then put into a concentration camp, and that's where they met. He was a strikingly handsome man, her father. Nuts, totally nuts, a psychiatrist. The kind of thing where if this guy's a psychiatrist, you never want to see a psychiatrist. He was a loony bin guy, a "loosy helmet," but attractive.

Glaser: Loosy helmet?

Lurie: Loosy helmet.

Glaser: What does that mean?

Lurie: Loose head. [Laughter] No crab in the Louie, as Herb Caen says. He wasn't quite that bad, but he really had a temper. Tremendous volatility. I remember one time his chasing his son around the table, trying to grab him to kill him. If it wasn't so tragic, it would have been funny. I was laughing because it was, to watch, humorous. But it wasn't fun being the son. I remember the son finally ran out the door (this was in Israel) and climbed a tree before his father could catch him. His father would have killed him, he was so angry. He was like a volcano. You had to walk around him so he wouldn't erupt. As bad as the father was, the mother was that nice. I thought I was marrying the mother when I married Mimi.

Glaser: What was the family name?

Lurie: Ruchwarger. I always kidded Mimi that one of the reasons she married me was to get an easy last name.

Classes Together at Hebrew University

Glaser: Did you have classes together?

Lurie: I made us have classes together. She was going through a regular year abroad program with the American Friends of Hebrew University, so she had some terrific professors. I would audit the classes--not for credit. One was with a professor by the name of Zvi Sobel who taught a course in sociology. He was a tenured professor at Brandeis. He came to Israel, I think, in '64. By the way, he's still in Israel, lives in Haifa, is a friend of mine. I hired him to be our Project Renewal coordinator. He was the first Project Renewal coordinator for Tel Hanan, which is in Nesher, right outside of Haifa. My meeting him through that class was the reason why we then connected and he ended up getting this job. Which is another whole long story. But, anyhow, his class was an excellent class.

There was a wonderful, wonderful Bible teacher. I can't remember his name right now, but he was very famous and still is famous today. This man was a genius teacher. He was wonderful. I was mesmerized by his class. The man would take apart a chapter in the Bible, word by word, and make it sink in. With the sparseness of the Hebrew language he would show how rich it really was in the way they phrased things. And the way one time a phrase was not there and the next time a phrase was there. He did something in Samuel II to this day I can't forget about: Samuel coming to the priest and asking if he had been called and, in fact, he had been called by God, not by the priest. The whole dialogue, back and forth, was wonderful. I still teach this to other people, but with joy based on what he taught me.

Glaser: You told me that Hebrew was difficult for you.

Lurie: Languages.

Glaser: Yes, the language of Hebrew.

Lurie: No. All languages. I said German and French, which I had taken in high school and college, were never very good subjects. Difficult--I don't have a good ear.

Glaser: But by the time you got to Israel, you must have been good enough in the language to take classes in Hebrew.

Lurie: Well, Sobel's class was not in Hebrew. See, this was designed for American students, these classes at Hebrew University. I'm trying to remember if Yadin's were in Hebrew or English. I can't remember any more; I think it was in English, too. These courses were in English or Ivrit Calah--Easy Hebrew. But Hebrew, different from other languages, I really worked at. I needed it. It was important. I'd still say I'm mediocre. I am not a great linguist. But I learned Hebrew--had to.

Glaser: Were you married in Israel?

Lurie: No. The year was completed, and then a year later, we got married. We didn't get married until the conclusion of my fourth year of rabbinical school. I went back for my fourth year.

Glaser: That would be 1968.

Lurie: We got married June 12, 1968.

VII FELLOW STUDENTS

Rabbinical Students in Jerusalem and Cincinnati

Glaser: Who were some of your fellow students in Cincinnati, at Hebrew Union College?

Lurie: Well, let me tell you who was in Israel. In Israel, one of my roommates was Michael La Burkien. Michael La Burkien is a wonderfully weird guy who was one of the original whiz kids. Remember that program, the Whiz Kids? He was one of the first of only four or five from HUC. Very bright guy. Very weird guy. A guy I never would have had anything to do with if I would have just been in Cincinnati. Not my kind of person. But I ended up liking him very much.

Another person who was in Israel for the year program was a fellow by the name of Michael Signer. Michael Signer today is a professor of Medieval Studies at Hebrew Union College--highly published, an extraordinarily bright, gifted linguist and thinker. He became one of my best friends, again because of that year program. So much so that those two guys became my study partners for the last two years I was in rabbinical school, my fourth and fifth years. Signer was the best student in the class by far. He was good as some of the professors. Within a ten-year span, he was probably the most gifted student they had there. La Burkien was brilliant but didn't have the ability that Signer did. They were my study partners, so it was a joke. I had the two brightest guys in the class; I would give them stories on fun things and they would give me knowledge. They certainly helped me a great deal as far as easing my way through rabbinical school. They couldn't take tests for me, but next to that they did everything else. La Burkien I have lost contact with; I saw him once or twice. But Signer I keep in contact with. He was a close friend.

My closest friend was probably Uri Hirscher. I met him only the last two years. Remember I had two years in rabbinical school, then I went to Israel for a year, and then two more years.

One of my first days back in Cincinnati, at the beginning of my fourth year, I went to the gym, and I saw this guy trying to play basketball. That's the only way I can describe it. He wasn't very good, but he was aggressive.

His name was Uri Hirscher. I didn't know him; he was from Los Angeles. Uri is now the executive vice-president of Hebrew Union College; he is the head of the Los Angeles school. He's building this cultural complex in Los Angeles. He ended up probably my best friend in rabbinical school. Not ended up, he was my best friend in rabbinical school, and we have stayed in contact ever since. There were others but not as close.

Michael Barenbaum was a friend of mine, not a close friend but a friend. He's a much closer friend now than he was then. I was one of these freaks that really got through Cincinnati in four years. I think he took eight or ten years. He quit for several years and was the director of a repertory theatre and did all kinds of things. Then he came back to rabbinical school. He graduated a year after me, even though Michael is four years older than I am, so it was a five-year spread.

VIII THE 1967 ISRAELI WAR

A Powerful Experience

Lurie: Let me tell you about the war. It was clearly the most powerful experience in my life: what happened before; what happened during; what happened immediately after. It really has shaped me and it has caused me now to confront a kind of destiny that is making my present wife crazy. It was a very difficult year for Israel. It was a year they called Mehtun.

##

Glaser: It was called Mehtun?

Lurie: Mehtun, meaning recession. Devastating economic problems in Israel. In a way as bad as what they are now, but for somewhat different reasons. The economy had slowed down, in fact had gone in reverse. There were more people leaving Israel than coming to Israel. I'm not talking tourists; I'm talking about Israelis. They had a negative outflow. In fact, the joke at the time was about the airport. It wasn't Ben Gurion at the time; it was Lod Airport. "Will the last one out please close the lights." That was the big joke that year.

So the Israelis were depressed. In spite of this overall depression, those of us going to school there just had this fabulous year. We lived on kibbutzim; we went on these fabulous trips called teulim; we learned Hebrew; we had exposure to Israelis; we had an excitement. We went on archaeological digs. We took from this country and enriched our lives to such a degree that we could be, if we became rabbis, much better rabbis than ever before. We had a debt of gratitude to the country and to its people. That's the way I felt.

Glaser: It's sounds as if you bonded not only to your fellow students but to the country as well.

Lurie: Powerfully to the country. I was imbued with that country's history. I saw the country this way: the vertical, not just the horizontal way but the vertical way, which is the richness of history, the connection, the connecting fiber. The wonderful story about "Well, I know you." "Oh, we haven't seen each other." "No, no. You don't understand. I saw you at Sinai." That sense of knowing Jews and having a sense of connection with Jews forever was clearly something I got out of this year. That Israel was the historic homeland of the Jewish people, and that I had been living in a physical exile, was clear to me. There was a determination that I would live in Israel thereafter. Maybe I would go back and get my ordination, but I wanted to come back to Israel.

Events Leading up to the War

Lurie: There were all kinds of terrorist activities that year: tremendous incursions from Jordan, particularly from Jordan, and counter-raids. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, or ten eyes for one eye. This whole thing was happening at the time. Then they closed the Straits of Tiran and it was scary because that was an international declaration of war. This was when Abba Eban went around to the world asking them for what they would do in case Israel had to fight; there was an act of war going on. He's sort of described by Elie Wiesel as a beggar, going from country to country asking for help, in his Beggar in Jerusalem. It was true, that's how it appeared in Israel. Nobody cared. Nobody gave a damn. It was like the Kurds today. In Israel you had a powerful sense of isolation for those two weeks before the war, and you had a real fear of whether you were going to survive. This is before Israel knew its military might. There was talk that if they overran us, we would drop a bomb on Aswan Dam. That was the kind of talk you heard.

I had all Israeli roommates. There were three bedrooms in my apartment. I was in one, and the other two were occupied: one by two Israelis, one by one Israeli. I was in with nothing but Israelis then, and I had a lot of Israeli contacts. There was just tremendous fear. These guys were army age, so these were people who had some kind of direct tie into the military.

Herzog, who is now the president of Israel, was the chief military analyst at the time. Every night he would talk and describe another army all arrayed against Israel: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia. There was something like fourteen confrontational states. It was awe-inspiring. It just sounded disastrous.

There were three warnings given by our State Department at the time. The first one said, "Things are getting bad; you might consider leaving." The second one said, "I think you should leave." The third one said, "If you stay, we can no longer be responsible for your safety. It's deteriorated to that point." At this point, Ezra Spicehandler called a meeting of the students and said, "Go home."

I asked him then to leave. I said to the group, "If you go home, you'll never be able to look yourself in the mirror." There were a couple of wives who got very angry at me. They were not studying, obviously, to be rabbis at the time. I said, "I'm sorry. This is how I feel. I think it's in your best interest and your husbands' best interest if they confront this now." I think of the eight only three left. Five did stay. But everybody was scared.

I began teaching school as a volunteer, because the call-up had taken everybody. I was teaching at a Beit Safer Dati, a religious school, and the kids had a great deal of difficulty understanding if I were Jewish or not, because I did not wear a kippah [skull cap]. I explained to them that I was a Reform Jew, and then they were certain that I wasn't Jewish. That just was so alien to anything that they had ever understood. But they liked me. I taught hitamlut, physical education. In fact, the days before the war, we would go walking around downtown Jerusalem and the kids, and there were hundreds that I was teaching, would cry out, "Mori! Mori!"--My teacher! My teacher!--as I would go by. I would go over and joke and laugh with the kids.

War Breaks Out

Lurie: I was out on June 5; school started at around 8:00. This is right off the major downtown area of New Jerusalem; not Old Jerusalem, obviously, because that was occupied by Jordan. We had heard some rumors that the war had started on June 5, but nothing was confirmed. I got to school, and the kids had talked about the war. They said to me, "Mori, did you hear the war has begun in the Sinai?" I didn't know anything about it. We were out on the yard, and all of a sudden Jordan attacked. The shooting began, machine guns and tanks and mortars, while we were in the playground. This is a war zone. This is not miles away. This is right there.

I remember these young Israeli kids (this was elementary school) were transfixed by the sound. They froze. It was a moment in time, Eleanor, that was just totally frozen. It will

never leave me, how they looked at me and I looked at them. I said to them, "Lachoo La'Mick Latim," which means go to the shelters. They ran to the shelters and I followed them in, and we stayed in those shelters for about three hours. It was something like from 8:30 until 11:30.

Then two other teachers, who happened to be Israelis, and I decided that we had to get something for the kids to drink. Here we were in the shelters; there were no food provisions at all, which was sort of careless, but it was the truth. We went to a supermarket that was totally closed down. Obviously, the whole city was. You would go between mortar fire. You would go down the street and you would see debris blow up. You were in this combat zone, so you were dodging, running. We got into the supermarket and we got hundreds of drinks. We decided all we could really carry were drinks.

Glaser: What did you do, break the door down?

Lurie: No, it was open. When the war started, everybody just ran to shelters. The whole city was in shelters. I think we took apples, I'm not sure. But drinks I remember. The drinks were in these little thin pads, like, so they were easy to carry.

Glaser: Those plastic things?

Lurie: The plastic things, so it wasn't very heavy. We took three or four hundred of them, just helped ourselves. Then I remember going out the front of the supermarket, and there was a Yediot Achranot, which is the afternoon newspaper. There was a headline and it said, "Four Hundred Planes destroyed on the ground in Egypt." This was before anything else was heard; it was just a shock to us.

What had happened is there was a leak. Israel was holding back the news twelve to twenty-four hours in order to confuse everyone as far as what they were really doing in the war. This was the first news. It was wonderful. I remember how the three of us cheered. We went back to the school and we gave out the drinks in the shelters. Then the principal decided that it was safer to send the kids home because we just didn't have provisions. We waited until parents began to come, until when all the kids were gone. Then I went back to my apartment, which was a seven-minute walk from there.

My apartment was right on the border of no man's land between New and Old Jerusalem. Mimi was living with me at the time. She had moved out of the dormitories and was living in town with me. And she wasn't there. Now, she had gotten a job volunteering, and I got worried. God forbid that she had gotten

hurt. I waited for about a half of an hour and then I left a note saying, "Stay here if you come. I'm out looking for you." And I went out in the streets.

The mortar fire was more intense. It was all over the place. You had these mortars falling and machine gun fire from Old Jerusalem to New Jerusalem. I was watching against the sides of the buildings. I went to look for her and I didn't know where to go. One of the places I went was the American Consulate. At the American Consulate there must have been two hundred, three hundred Americans packed into this building. These people were scared to death because they had been warned to leave, and now here--the war. I had never been in a war. Here you're in a war zone. I remember there was an American consular staff person, a youngish woman, and she was berating, yelling at these people, "Keep your voices down! How dare you complain. We told you to go home. You just stop your whimpering."

I looked at her and I said, "Who the hell are you? Who do you work for? How dare you treat these American citizens that way. You're an employee of these people. What is your name? I am reporting you unless this stops at once." It was very hushed and she stopped and I looked around. My only interest was Mimi. Then I left there and continued my search. By the time I got back to the apartment, Mimi had come to the apartment. She had gotten trapped in one of the fire zones and couldn't get out. Then finally she got out and had come back there.

That night the shell fire was intense. The way all new apartment buildings in the new part of Jerusalem, not the Jordan part of Jerusalem, were built was that the balconies did not face the border. They faced away from the border, so you didn't have as good a view but you were protected from sniper fire. It was not uncommon that people would be shot that lived in pre-'48 buildings when the new border was established. They would get picked off of their balconies or picked out of their kitchens because of sniper fire. What you had to do was put up walls to protect windows that were facing the border. Mine was a post-'48 building, so the only thing my balcony looked out on was down towards the Dead Sea area, but sort of at a slant.

Glaser: That would be south.

Lurie: It looked a little bit south, and basically it looked east. Right on the border. At night the tracer bullets went right by my balcony; they looked like fireflies. It was really weird to watch them. It was like I could put my hand out and catch a butterfly. Did you ever catch those fireflies as a kid?

Glaser: Sure.

Lurie: Well, I did too. Put them in jars and they would light up and then you would let them out. This is what it looked like. The pathway for machine gun fire was right in front of my balcony. Mortar fire was so intense the building was shaking. So we decided, about 3:00 in the morning, to go down to the shelter in the building. We went down there for about three hours.

Glaser: Did every building have a shelter?

Lurie: Every building had a michlat, a shelter. We went down into this michlat and it was awful. First of all, I'm claustrophobic and there were hundreds of people in it. It was hot and it was dank. I said I just couldn't live like that. I would rather go back up to my apartment.

So what we decided to do that morning was go up to Hebrew Union College, because there were rooms there. Normally we were not allowed to stay there, but during this time we figured it wouldn't be a bad place. The building had been taken over by the Jerusalem Police Department. Since it was right on the border, it became one of the headquarters of the police department.

Glaser: That's located right next to--?

Lurie: Next to the King David Hotel.

Glaser: Was it there at that time?

Lurie: Oh, yes, but small. It was only one building, but there were six or seven apartments in that one building. Mimi and I that morning made our way up the street. It was only a five- to seven-minute walk from our apartment to there. But it was a trip because it was a free fire zone all the way up there. There were passageways from the Old City right clear in through. So when you would cut across an area, you would have to move. You ran. Gunfire and stuff were all around. I'm not overly dramatizing this. This is how it was.

This was the morning of the 6th. We went up to Hebrew Union College, where we stayed the evening of the 6th. And we took, by the way, a direct mortar hit at HUC. The building was reinforced. It was built like a bunker because that was the deal. One of the ways they got permission to build the school initially was that if the war started they would turn it over to the police. They had to have reinforced walls, reinforced ceilings. Where we were sleeping, we took a direct mortar shot. There was damage in the roof, but we were fine. But the whole building shook like that. It was not significant, so we stayed there.

We were all together, eating, the evening of the 6th. Bill Deaver's wife started talking about, "You Jews. Those poor Palestinians and you Jews." I can't remember what her name was. I said, "You better watch your mouth." There were maybe fifteen of us in the room. Several other professors, obviously Bill Deaver was there too, and maybe six or seven students. She stopped, but she stopped only because I was menacing. I was just pissed. I don't know what I would have done to her, but I would have made a terrible scene. That was as much as I was going to say at the time. I think I turned to Bill and I said, "If she doesn't stop, you better stop her. I'm holding you responsible."

She was an anti-Semite, which was interesting. They had lived in two worlds because at that time he could go back and forth, and he was dealing with archaeological people in East Jerusalem as well as West Jerusalem. In fact, he became eventually the head of archaeology for the Rockefeller Museum. Wright was one of the great archaeologists in Old Palestine, and Deaver was a student of his. He became the head of the Wright Archaeological Institute later on. But the Deaver family had very strong ties to East Jerusalem and to the Palestinians. She was very sympathetic to the Palestinians.

Which I am, too. But who started the war? They started the war. This was a defensive act on the part of Israel. My eyes witnessed it; I saw their tanks attack; I saw the fire. And the Jordanians were warned to stay out of this war in the beginning.

The early afternoon of June 7th there was an intensification of attack by the Israelis upon Jerusalem. You could see the strafing. Jet airplanes were coming and strafing, and they were also, I believe, dropping napalm. There is no confirmation of that, but I am almost certain that they were dropping napalm, because I saw these brilliant flashes of light and fire as the planes would drop whatever they were dropping. Unless I don't know what bombs can do.

Glaser: It would be interesting to know if napalm existed back then.

Lurie: Oh, no, it did. They were using it in Vietnam at the time.

Glaser: That's true. I think of Vietnam as being later.

Lurie: It definitely existed then. Whether it was napalm or not, it appeared to be napalm. It was clear that there was an intensive attack upon the Old City of Jerusalem. I didn't know it, but the Jordanian Legion was fleeing, going east toward the Dead Sea area to get across the Jordan River.

Michael La Burkien, one of the fellows I described, the Whiz Kid guy, had graduated from ROTC in college and knew how bullets up very close sound. He and I were out on the roof, looking at this bombing, strafing, attacking. We had a bird's-eye view from the Hebrew Union College roof garden out over the Old City. It was magnificent. This wasn't windows facing; this was a huge rooftop balcony, with a spectacular view of the war.

All of the sudden we began to hear "Zing, Zing, Zing." That's exactly how it sounded. I thought they were birds. But what was going on was a sniper was trying to pick us off, and the bullets were that close to our heads. La Burkien yelled at me, "Hit the deck!" I said, "Why?" He said, "They're shooting at us!" Otherwise I wouldn't be here today; I'm certain of it. The guy had bad aim, but I would have been standing out there thinking that they were bees or something coming by me. I had heard machine-gun fire and mortars and had seen that stuff. But these were single bullets; this was a sniper. Then we came back inside.

By the way, early that morning of the 7th there were loudspeaker trucks going around the Old City of Jerusalem, telling the Palestinians not to resist. They would not be harmed, they should just cool it. I can't tell you exactly when it was in the afternoon, but at one point it was clear that whatever forces existed in the Old City were no longer there. We came out again on the balcony. I watched and listened as "Hatikva," the national anthem, was played and the flag was raised. You heard me say it at the Citadel, remember? At the first day, when you were on the Mega Mission.

Glaser: Oh, yes.

Lurie: Where I got up and made a very brief presentation about watching the flag being raised over Migdal David, the Tower of David. As the flag was being raised, I heard what I thought (as I said on the mission) the roar of an ocean. I turned around and behind me, because I'm right on the border now, behind me were the apartment buildings of New Jerusalem. On the balconies and on the rooftops of the buildings, I saw thousands and thousands of people watching what I was watching, and they were cheering and they were laughing and they were crying, because they were watching the reunification of Jerusalem.

Maslow talks about peak experiences. That was it. It was just overwhelming. That's an experience that you wait 1,900 years for. That was the end of the war in Jerusalem. Obviously, it continued in other parts. I left the country after they had captured the Golan Heights and the war was over. The war was over on Saturday, and I believe I left that Sunday or Monday. I had

delayed my trip; I was supposed to leave Israel, not because of the war, on something like the first of June.

I had ordered a Volvo P1800, the sports car, directly from the factory in Gothenburg, Sweden, and I had sent them a telegram saying, "Can't come now. Pray for peace." They put this telegram up on the bulletin board of this huge Volvo factory. That's when the Swedes were very friendly to Israel. I had become famous through this thing, because everybody saw it. In fact, so common was it to talk about this telegram that when my parents called because they didn't know where I was; I didn't call them and tell them I was staying in Israel. I just didn't want to worry them. Let them think I was going to Europe; it was just as well.

They called up the factory to find if I picked up the car. The operator said, "What's your name?" "Lurie." "Oh." This operator, or whoever it was, told my parents what the telegram said.

IX RETURN TO HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

Student Rabbi Positions

Glaser: Then you resumed your studies?

Lurie: I resumed my rabbinical studies at HUC but as a very changed person, realizing that my interest was Diaspora's relations with those living in Israel, and that was going to be my life's work.

Glaser: When you returned, did you have a pulpit as a student? That's quite common.

Lurie: I had a pulpit. My first pulpit was in Jasper, Alabama. I had gone to other places for moments, but this was a once a month thing.

Glaser: What did you do? Fly down?

Lurie: I flew down to Atlanta and then to Birmingham, and then an hour's ride from Birmingham to Jasper. This is a little town that was at one time very frequented by the Klan.

Glaser: How many Jews were there in Jasper?

Lurie: There were about fifteen, twenty Jewish families. Ten of them were very wealthy.

Glaser: From what?

Lurie: All kinds of textile merchandise kind of stuff. They were lovely people--the Mitniks, the Engles--nice people. They didn't know why I had to make such a big deal out of Martin Luther King's death, but they were nice people. He was assassinated when I was down there as a student rabbi.

You and I should stop because I think you have to go to see Wayne Feinstein.

[Interview 3: May 6, 1991] ##

Glaser: After earning your rabbinical degree, what was the process of finding a pulpit?

Lurie: You don't want to talk any more about Jasper, Alabama, or Danville, Illinois?

Glaser: We didn't talk about Danville. What do you have to tell me about that?

Lurie: There are a lot of stories about Danville, but it was interesting. This was a really dying Reform congregation. In fact, I'll never forget the first time I was to speak. I didn't know really anything about the congregation except how large it was supposed to be, which was thirty families or some such thing. I had dinner with one of the members of the congregation, and I was going to talk about sabra. The meaning of the word sabra and the relationship to how that word played out in modern Israel. Not a terribly original sermon, but I thought it would give them a good sense of where I was coming from. I remember walking up before the congregation. The sermon was in the middle, but I was reading prayers and I finally took a good look at the congregation. It sounds funny, but while I was reading prayers and some people were coming in, I paid very little attention.

Then I took a good look at the congregation when I was going to give the sermon. There was one person that was basically pounding his hearing aid and it was whistling. Another one who was sort of sprawled--the guy either had just or was about to die, I wasn't sure which. The average age was late seventies, with a heavy sprinkling of people in their nineties. As I later joked, there was one person who was brought out in a wheelchair and another in a stretcher. That's sort of the way I felt. I totally forgot what I was going to talk about. I stood up there looking out at this congregation, and I didn't have any idea of what I was going to say. No idea. The whole sabra speech had left my head. I stood there for a couple of minutes at least. Finally I remembered.

The good thing about this is I have never gone before an audience again without having at least some notes of what I was going to talk about, because you never know when this loss of memory strikes you.

Glaser: Tell me about writing a sermon. Did you enjoy that? Were you comfortable with the writing of a sermon?

Lurie: I wrote sermons for my High Holiday pulpits as a student. At the first year of Temple Emanu-El, I wrote almost every sermon I delivered. Thereafter, very few. I always wrote one High Holiday sermon that I gave. But I speak well extemporaneously, so I found that if I had an outline I could do virtually just as well speaking from the outline, as long as I thoroughly knew my subject matter, as I could if I had prepared texts. With a prepared text, I would just memorize it anyhow, because I always believed in eye contact with the audience. It was terribly important.

Did I enjoy doing sermons? When I had something to say, yes, I loved doing it. But quite often I found I had very little to say. Or it was just a repetition of an old theme. At times like that, I was better off just doing some studying with the congregation. That was not the tradition at Emanu-El. At Emanu-El we had to always prepare and each rabbi had to speak once a week. That was laborious. Quite often I had nothing to say.

Glaser: Going back to Danville, was there anything aside from having this aged congregation?

Lurie: It had gotten to be interesting, because there was a Conservative congregation in town that had lost their rabbi, and that was a vital congregation. So I spent the whole year trying to merge the two. I did a lot with the Conservative congregation. Nothing ever happened. They did not merge, or maybe they have subsequently merged because the Reform congregation died. It made the year much more interesting because of this other congregation. I ended up being the rabbi at both the Conservative and the Reform congregation.

Glaser: You had enough time, going down once a month, to do that?

Lurie: No. This was once every other week. This was more than Jasper. Jasper was once a month.

Interviewing for a Pulpit

Glaser: When it came time to getting a pulpit, what was the process?

Lurie: The process was that you put yourself on a list and then the rabbis would interview you. First of all, the rabbis would indicate if they were coming to interview or if they wanted you to come out to their congregation. Usually the senior rabbis from all over the country would fly into Cincinnati or New York and they would say they were going to be there for two days or three days, whatever the number of days. They were going to leave their

time open for the college to set up an interviewing process. If you were interested in one of these rabbis or congregations, you would put your name on the list and have an interview time.

Glaser: What was the role of the Rabbinical Placement Commission in this?

Lurie: The Rabbinical Placement Commission doesn't do a whole lot with people on an entry basis. That's basically handled by the college and by the rabbis out in the field. At least, that's how it was historically.

Glaser: So it's more for senior rabbi placement?

Lurie: It's more for once you're in out in the field. Then they go through the Rabbinical Placement Commission.

Glaser: How did it work for you in getting the pulpit in San Francisco?

Lurie: What happened was that at the time that these lists came out, or these rabbis were circularizing what they were going to do as far as their days, et cetera, Mimi and I had concluded that we were moving to Israel.

Glaser: You were married by then?

Lurie: I was married. I got married on June 12, 1968. That last year, then, in rabbinical school was my last year, my fifth year. Fourth year in Cincinnati, but fifth year as far as years since I began. I had one year in Jerusalem, if you remember.

Mimi and I were committed to moving to Israel. I was in the process of seeking a job with Hebrew Union College in Israel as the dean of students. I was simultaneously trying to get accepted as a Ph.D. candidate at Hebrew University. My plan was to work at the college, sort of like a part-time job, where it would pay my expenses and give me something to do that I really cared about. Ezra Spicehandler, who was the head of the school, wanted me to do this.

In a sense, I had actually built the job. Remember, when we started there were only five, six, seven students a year going to Israel, and now there were twenty-five, thirty students a year. There was really something to do to organize these students and to make it right for them. I was asking for a very small salary. \$2,500, \$3,000, some small amount that sounds like nothing today. It appeared to be no problem.

But as a lark I figured I would interview with three congregations. I signed up to go to a congregation in Philadelphia called Main Line. I think that was the name of it;

there was probably a Hebrew name for it. It was on the main line. Also a congregation with Rabbi Schaalman in Chicago, and Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco. I'm trying to remember chronologically what happened. The whole year I thought I was going to get into HUC Jerusalem as the dean and into Hebrew University. I was waiting. I was more concerned about Hebrew University than I was about HUC.

Some time in February or March, before the interviewing began, Nelson Glueck, who--. He and I had more than a passing relationship. In fact, I was probably the only student that he had a relationship with in the five years of school that I was there. Nobody else had any--. He was away; he was distant; he was not involved. He and I got to know each other very well. The guy had genuine affection for me, and I had a lot of regard and respect for him. We had a relationship; we spent time together. Remember, he co-signed a letter for fundraising to alumni for money to go to Israel for rabbinical students.

But, as I think I mentioned to you before, Nelson Glueck really didn't want me there. I didn't realize that at the time I set this whole thing up. In fact, what he did was when he got over to Jerusalem in February or March he made a phone call or sent a wire saying there wasn't enough money to hire me. He didn't want to tell me. He had Ken Rosman, who was the dean of students at HUC in Cincinnati at the time, tell me.

Ken called me into his office to tell me this, and I was just shocked. First of all, he did it that way; he knew how much I had cared about it. He had a personal relationship with me and then the unmitigated gall to say he didn't have enough money. It was nothing, for \$3,000 I was going to basically do something meaningful. It wasn't like I was asking for a \$30,000-or-\$40,000 or-anything-like-it job. I was shocked. I really was. It clearly soured my relationship with Glueck.

So what I did immediately is that I then submitted an application to Brandeis University for their doctoral program there, which I basically wrote myself. It would have been one year at Brandeis, three years in Israel, and one year back at Brandeis to get my Ph.D., teaching the whole time. I would have been the head of the school in Israel while I was there; they had a program in Israel at that time. Unfortunately, they do not right now. I can't remember the name of it.

Anyhow, I submitted this rush application. I flew to Brandeis to meet the professors in this Near Eastern Department and I was waiting to hear back from them. While I was waiting, I signed up for these three congregations. If I would have been accepted for the Hebrew Union College job, I never would have even

interviewed. But since now I was waiting for Brandeis, I figured what the hell. I might as well go take a look.

So I set up interviews, and I went first to Philadelphia with Mimi. It was peculiar. The senior interviewing rabbi was very nice. I can't remember how many people were interviewing for this job but I was one of them, obviously. As I said, I really liked the rabbi, and I liked the congregation. It seemed like a lovely place to be.

And then I met his board. There was one guy on his board that kept on jumping out of his seat. He would say something and he would jump out of his seat. Later I learned he was a dynamite salesman. This guy asked me the following question: "All right. Rabbi, if you come to work here, for whom do you work? Do you work for him or do you work for us?"

Glaser: Do you mean he pointed to the senior rabbi? [laughter]

Lurie: Yes. [laughter] I said, "I work for him; I don't work for you. I'm the junior rabbi; I work for him." That was not the answer this guy was looking for, obviously. Right then I decided I didn't want to go near this place. No matter what else happened, if I had no other jobs, if Israel didn't come through, forget it. It was clear that the rabbi had some problems with his board. That was the number one interview.

Number two: I went to Chicago where I interviewed with Rabbi Schaalman, a wonderful man. There was one other guy that was interviewing with me.

Glaser: Can you remember the name of the congregation?

Lurie: No, but it was on the North Shore of Chicago. Lovely. I watched this other fellow, Larry Kushner, he's a rabbi now, well-esteemed. He has written several books and is an expert on Jewish mysticism. Anyhow, he was the other person interviewing. I was flying from Philadelphia, and he flew up from Cincinnati. I met him and we spent the better part of a full day with Schaalman. I really was rarely more impressed by a human being. He was wonderful to be with. We watched him do a funeral; we watched him spend time teaching. He talked with us. There was a quality about the man that I just found to be outstanding. I thought to myself, "Now, this is a place, if Israel doesn't work out, that maybe I should consider."

At night we were going to go to the president's home. I thought, "Well, that's nice. We'll meet the president." We get to the house and there are fifteen men there and one woman, who was the wife of the president, and then she leaves. Schaalman

hadn't told us how this was going to be, but we hadn't asked either. There was this one man who stands out, I can't remember anybody else there--vaguely the president, very well the rabbi, and this one other man. He was a 250-pound man-eating psychiatrist. Starting over hors d'oeuvres and during the first course he went after the other rabbi. "What's your background?" "Well, I'm a philosophy major." "What area of philosophy?" "Logical positives." "Very nice. Tell me about it." Within ten minutes, it was very clear this psychiatrist knew more about logical positivism than my friend did. He was brilliant. There were no ifs, ands, or buts. This was a very outstandingly gifted man.

But he was an unmitigated asshole, too, because he was just boring into this guy--destroying him. He made mincemeat of him. I joked and said, "My colleague was unfortunately the first course." He just ate him. Then they decided they would have a break. They would have dinner, the main course, and then they would have me for dessert. Well, I had had it. It was done right in front of me; it wasn't like they asked me to leave or anything. This whole thing, he was so despicable. Now, we were going to go to the other room for dessert. I walk up to this psychiatrist and I say to him in Hebrew, basically, 'You're a fucking asshole.' Except there aren't such words in Hebrew, but it's tantamount to that. Nobody else could hear me, and such a smart guy I assumed he spoke Hebrew. Much to my surprise he turned to me and he said, "Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I never learned Hebrew. I never had a chance to learn Hebrew." [laughter] At which point, I answered him in Hebrew again.

Well, he asked one question of me during the course of my interview. That one question I answered in Hebrew. Nobody else in the place spoke Hebrew. Don't misunderstand me. It was a quick two-sentence response to his question. He didn't say, "I don't understand." He was embarrassed; nobody said anything; and everybody else just picked it up.

Glaser: Isn't it unusual to have two applicants go together on an interview?

Lurie: Unheard of. Awful, disrespectful to both people, and to the process, and clearly to the senior rabbi. This guy was like a few people that are in that field. He shouldn't have had the right to be in that field.

Glaser: Why did your college placement office set that up?

Lurie: It was much looser then. Rabbis set things up pretty much anyway. Maybe there are rules for it now, but at that time there was no such rule. So that night I get back and I said to Schaalman,

"That was the worst thing I have ever seen. How could you let something like that happen?" "Well, I'm terribly embarrassed. I didn't know he would be like that." I didn't say this to him, I thought, "Don't call me; I'll call you." That was it. It was left that he would go back to the search committee and they would call us and let us know. It ended up neither one of us, obviously, went there. He didn't even get an assistant rabbi that year. He got one the next year; hopefully he had learned his lesson.

That was Chicago. I figured: Philadelphia, Chicago--now I know why I'm not going to go on the practical route. You've got people on the boards that are just beyond belief.

I went to California. From my initial take of Asher--I spent an hour and ten minutes with him, of which he spoke for an hour and five minutes and I got five words in. So I figured this isn't going to work. Basically, the only reason I went out there is because both Dick Zions and Asher had begged me to come. They said that the first interview was a mistake. It was just simply because Rabbi Asher was so shocked to see how young I looked, and that threw him off so completely. I decided I would go out there. They wanted me to bring Mimi, and I said, "No, I don't want to bring Mimi." They said they would pay for it, if I took the job. I said, "No, you'll just pay for me; we'll wait on her."

It was in April that these interviews were going on. It was as only San Francisco can be the second week of April. And there was snow back East in every place I went and snow in Cincinnati. It was beautiful; not as warm as today, but high sixties, low seventies. It was sparkling, magnificent. I had been to San Francisco once before, but I had never seen it like this. That first night that I was here there was a lecture at Emanu-El on archaeology. Seven hundred people attended. I hadn't seen the beautiful facility, the big congregation.

I went over to Berkeley; I could study over there for my Ph.D. and study with Zev Brinner. I met with him. Yes, I could be a part-time student. Yes, they would accept me on that kind of basis, blabbity, blah, blah, blah. It was like a fraternity rush. Asher couldn't have been more winning. He was funny, he was kind, caring, et cetera. I was actually swept away. I guess, in the back of my mind, I had just sort of decided, "You know, maybe it's enough school. You want to move to Israel. This thing didn't work out with HUC; I have to spend this time in Boston; who knows what's going to happen there."

On the spot, without my wife ever coming here or ever seeing San Francisco, I accepted the job. I had three conditions: One, I could get my Ph.D. at Berkeley, and that was all right with them

so I could have released time. Two, they understood that I was a rabid Zionist, and that they should understand that a lot of my sermons were going to be about Israel. I knew that even though Alvin Fine had been the rabbi after Rabbi Reichert there was still some anti-Zionism in the congregation. And three, I wasn't going to dicker with them about salary. By the way, Sam Ladar was the one who negotiated my salary with me.

Glaser: Oh, is that right?

Lurie: Yes, I just spoke at his funeral; I didn't mention that. But he was the one, in 1969, who negotiated my salary. I said to Sam, "I'm not negotiating. My classmates have set a standard salary of \$14,000. That's it. That's the deal." "Well, we don't have that much money." I said, "I'm not going to dicker. I think I'm if not the best guy in my class I'm one of the best. I think I'm as deserving of the same salary as everybody else is getting, so I'm not going to argue about it." So that ended up being the case.

So those were the three conditions. I called Mimi and I said, "We're going to move here." She said, "Are you crazy? What about Israel?" I said, "Look, we're going to try this."

Mimi had been at Washington, she wasn't in Cincinnati either. When we got home (we returned the same day), there was a letter waiting from Brandeis. Full scholarship, \$6,000 stipend, which at that time was a fair amount of money. The doctoral program I had designed had been totally accepted by them--one year there, three years I would be the head of the program in Israel. For three days, we agonized over that, just agonized. In life, it's the road not taken. So we decided to continue with Emanu-El.

Glaser: One of those turning points of life?

Lurie: If that letter would have come before I had gone off on the trip, I would not have gone.

Glaser: I'm sure you often speculate what your life would have been had you taken that.

Lurie: No, I haven't, I really haven't speculated. But there are so many ironies, because for the past nine months I have been an applicant to be the president of Brandeis University. This is the school I didn't go to.

X CONGREGATION EMANU-EL, 1969-1972

A Warm Welcome

Glaser: When you did come out here, did you enroll in a Ph.D. program?

Lurie: No. There was no time. They knew better than I did. It was all dependent upon my time. We were out eight nights a week. We had no children. We were wined and dined and feted in every way. It was wonderful. It was exhilarating. I had the best time being a rabbi at Emanu-El. Just a great experience. I was just swept away.

Glaser: It sounds as if there was really an attempt to make you part of the congregation and community.

Lurie: From day one I felt totally welcome here. My wife was totally welcome; we were so integrated into the community.

Glaser: Did you have a hard time finding a place to live?

Lurie: The first day we arrived here I found a place to live. It was 2856 Scott. This is something funny. Richard Zions had an apartment that overlooked the Safeway on, I think, 32nd Avenue out in the avenues. He said, "Should I save this for you?" I said, "No, you can give the apartment up," because I wanted a view. His view was a Safeway. [laughter] Sure enough, this apartment on Scott, which we had found on the first day that we were here, for \$250 a month (I was paid \$14,000 so that was still a fair amount of money for me) was just a beautiful one-bedroom apartment with a view of Alcatraz and out towards Russian Hill. It was wonderful.

Glaser: Did Mimi get a job?

Lurie: Mimi ended up working for Richard Goldman on behalf of the Citizens' Waterfront Committee. That was a group that he put together. We became very, very close to the Goldmans almost right

away. The reason was Susie, their youngest child and only daughter, was in my first confirmation class. She was one of the leaders when I started this confirmation in Israel program. She was on that first program. So we became just very close, as I did with a lot of the kids because of that experience.

Assistant Rabbi Duties

Glaser: What were your duties as assistant rabbi?

Lurie: Basically confirmation and up, as far as schooling. Joe Asher and I both taught the confirmation class. The high school was my responsibility. The high school was largely dormant when I came, as it is now, but by the time I left we had at least eighty students enrolled in high school. It was enormous. We had at least five different courses going on. It was vital and exciting. That's because of the Israel program and the follow-up to the Israel program. I was teaching that level, and from the pulpit I had to give a sermon a week. Of the four major High Holiday sermons, I delivered one. Funerals and weddings upon request, and obviously the first year there were few. By the third year I was sharing pretty much with Joe in funerals and weddings.

Glaser: You also had some adult education classes.

Lurie: We had adult education, and I taught a conversion class on a weekly basis at Emanu-El.

Glaser: How was the conversion class conducted?

Lurie: I didn't call it a conversion class. I called it Basic Judaism. To graduate from this class, you didn't come five, six, eight times; you had to come thirty-some times. I insisted that Jewish spouses come.

Glaser: Was this both history and ethics?

Lurie: It was everything. In thirty-some meetings you could teach quite a bit to people. It was the holidays; it was the Jewish customs and ceremonies; it was Bible; it was a little bit of everything.

Glaser: Did everybody in the class convert?

Lurie: The classes were big. You ended up getting people at different times during the year, but I ended up having forty people in a

class. It was fun; it was one of the more enjoyable things I did then.

Confirmation in Israel Program

Glaser: As far as these trips to Israel for the confirmation class, I understand before that there had been groups going that were from all over the country. Yours was the first one from one synagogue. Is that right?

Lurie: Yes. It was a new concept. I have to give Joe Asher real credit. He had to fight lay people who were not very interested in this. But almost from day one, when I brought up the idea, he endorsed it. He gave me his full support to run with it, which was great. Whatever one might say about our relationship, what I have to say is that he basically let me do whatever I wanted to do if I had an idea and it wasn't too outrageous--

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Lurie: He let me run with it, and he was quite supportive. This was a big program, obviously. The first year that we did it we had thirty-six kids going. Nobody believed it. In Israel, they still thought of Emanu-El as the anti-Zionist congregation, which was unfair because it wasn't. They had never seen anybody produce a whole class. That we would have a bus full just seemed so unlikely.

Glaser: What were the logistics and the planning that went into that?

Lurie: It was really quite simple. I didn't do any of the itinerary the first year. It was all done with AZYF, the American Zionist Youth Foundation and the Noar Ve Hechalutz.

Glaser: They did all the arrangements?

Lurie: They coordinated the program. But then I added some things to it, and I changed some things as we went along. It was as I knew it would be because I had done the same thing with Mimi in '68 out of a New York-based program. That's where I got the idea from. It didn't originate with me. It was something I had actually gone on and led. I saw that it was a fantastic experience and the best way to take young people and really give them a love of Israel and a love of their Judaism.

Glaser: Did this involve staying and working on a kibbutz and having a family assigned to each student?

Lurie: Yes, staying on a kibbutz and having a family assigned on the kibbutz, which was a ten-day experience, and staying in a nature school. We stayed in Sde Boker the first couple of years and also down in Ein Gedi. You stayed four or five days there and you do a lot of hiking. You take trips in the north of the country and you spend two weeks in Jerusalem. It's educational, it's cultural, it's fun. Kids had a great time. It's a wonderful experience. The community has sent over two thousand kids on these trips. It started in 1970 and it's still going today.

Glaser: And then it spread to other congregations.

Lurie: Now it's a community program. Now they average about 160 kids a year. I spread it to the community before I left. The second year I did it it wasn't just Emanu-El, it was also Beth Sholom and Sherith Israel and Rodef Sholom. The third year, when I did not go with it, that was the summer that I left here, I was running the program out of my desk. I had 160 kids going from all over the Bay Area. I had gone out and spoken to congregations. I was the one who got the checks to pay for the program. I put it all through the New York office. So I set the whole thing up.

Glaser: Did you do anything with adult missions?

Lurie: No. Nothing.

Community Involvement

Glaser: When you were at Temple Emanu-El did you do anything in the community?

Lurie: I did a couple of things. I was a member of the Committee of 100 at the Federation. That was an involvement.

Glaser: That was social planning and budgeting?

Lurie: Right. The first community shaliach that was hired was hired through my push here at the Federation. I also helped get rid of the community shaliach [laughter]. So not only did I help start it, I helped finish it.

Glaser: Why?

Lurie: I don't think it's a good program. It's a whole long story. At the moment in time it was important, but it ceased being important.

Glaser: But there is a shaliach now, is there not?

Lurie: There's no community shaliach any more. It's ended now here. You have one in Oakland.

Glaser: Right.

Lurie: For Ami [Ami Nahshon--the East Bay Federation executive], it's a cheap way of getting help. That's because it doesn't cost Ami very much, but it costs the Jewish people about twice what he pays.

Glaser: How do you mean that?

Lurie: What the Israelis put into it. What the Jewish Agency, the WZO puts into it. The shalichim are very expensive. They don't cost twenty-five, thirty thousand dollars a year. They cost more like eighty to ninety thousand dollars a year.

Glaser: Really?

Lurie: They are the most expensive people you have on your staff next to Ami.

Glaser: There is also one at the UAHC [Union of American Hebrew Congregations].

Lurie: That's a little more complicated. That guy isn't as expensive. That's David Bernstein. But your shaliach costs--. I'm certain he's the second most expensive person on your staff for the Jewish people's dollars. You don't know it because it's hidden. But that's why I consider it our money. We send it there, and they turn around and reroute it through this person. So I can't justify spending that kind of money on an individual. I've got staff people who are making a lot less that are a lot better.

Trips to Russia and Poland

Glaser: Well, I'm surprised to hear that. You had a trip to Russia when you were at Temple Emanu-El. How did that come about?

Lurie: I just decided that I had to go to Russia to see what was going on. That was in '71. Very memorable. There are three trips that a Jew has to take if they live in America. The first is to Israel, the second is to Poland, and third is to the Soviet Union.

Glaser: Why Poland? Because of the concentration camps?

Lurie: To see what it was, yes. If you're born in America, then it is imperative.

Glaser: You weren't interested in seeing the camps in Germany?

Lurie: They are not as profound. There is nothing like seeing Auschwitz-Birkenau. Maidanek and Sobibor and Treblinka are all very powerful in their own way, but nothing is like Auschwitz-Birkenau. It's a flower garden to go to Dachau. Dachau is nothing, relatively speaking. Have you been to Poland?

Glaser: No, but Dachau was plenty powerful.

Lurie: It's powerful, and I've been to Mauthausen outside of Vienna, and that's plenty powerful, too. But it is nothing, believe me, nothing like the experience of Auschwitz-Birkenau. I have seen people's lives being changed by going to these places. Really changed. In fact, I was on a mission with Michael Franzblau, a doctor in Marin, who said his life has never been the same since that trip. That was in 1976. You don't get trips that have that kind of lasting significance unless they are incredibly powerful. And it is.

The trip to the Soviet Union was equally powerful. The incarceration of the Jews. The major compelling reason why I am now moving towards this national UJA job is because now those Russians are getting out.

Glaser: Were you able to make contact with the refuseniks?

Lurie: I met the whole time with Dr. Vladimir Slepak. Mimi and I met with him in his apartment and had moving meetings with him. In fact, I have a sermon I should give you on this, where he began to talk and he pointed to the ceiling.

[Interview 4: May 9, 1991] ##

Glaser: When we stopped last time, you were talking about the trip to Russia and to Poland. Did members of the congregation go with you?

Lurie: Well, the trip to the Soviet Union was in '71. I went with Mimi, just the two of us.

Glaser: But you had mentioned Dr. Franzblau.

Lurie: That was to Poland.

Glaser: These were two separate trips?

Lurie: Two totally separate trips. I went to the Soviet Union in '71 and I have been three times to Poland, but the first time was in 1976. Each time was with a group of people from this Federation.

Jewish Education

Glaser: All right. Then we'll go back to '71 and have you talk more about the various aspects of education at Congregation Emanu-El, because you had a lot of different things going on. You had taught the high school, which had a large class. I wanted to ask you, was this as effective as having a Jewish day school? Because modern leaders like Yitz Greenberg and David Hartman emphasize the importance of the Jewish day school.

Lurie: I do, too. I don't think there is anything that replaces a good Jewish day school, because you are getting the fundamentals and you are learning it on a day-to-day basis. Language study, et cetera, that's what you need. The repetition of Jewish history and Jewish tradition and a knowledge basis necessary to even be a minimal understander of Jewish history requires a kind of study you can't get in an afternoon or a once-a-week school. So, no, this is not in place of, this is just different. You're not going to get most Jews going to day schools so you try to give them some kind of a Jewish educational base in a more modest way. This is a more modest way.

What this is is the next best thing to Jewish day school education. It is informal Jewish education. The summer in Israel then attached itself to formal education, which were these classes. They were five in number that began to spring up about the confirmation returnees. By the time at Emanu-El that we got the second year--'70 was the first year, so '70-'71 was the first high school year with these kids, and then '71-'72 was the second year. By that second year, as I said, we had eighty kids in the high school. Almost forty from each confirmation class, which was virtually half the confirmation class, going on voluntarily to high school. Up until then, confirmation was more what parents required. But high school was something that was strictly voluntary in most households. So to have 50 percent of your kids continue was just almost unheard of.

Glaser: How frequently did they meet with you?

Lurie: They met every Sunday for a variety of different subjects. There were five different classes. There was one on Jewish philosophy,

one on Jewish history. There was a Hebrew studies program which met twice a week. A bunch of kids were in that. I frankly don't remember what the other two courses were.

Glaser: What were you doing with adult education?

Lurie: Well, Emanu-El had a regular structure of adult education where twice a year there were classes for eight weeks each. You would teach different courses. So I did that, obviously, twice a year along with Rabbi Asher.

Glaser: Is this the Educational Institute?

Lurie: Whatever they called it. I don't remember. It was part of Emanu-El. Then in addition I did this once a week teaching all throughout the year for what I call Basic Judaism, which was the potential conversion class, although it was just called a Basic Judaism class.

Glaser: Did you have anything to do with Camp Swig?

Lurie: Every summer I spent a week or so teaching down there as well.

Glaser: Were you the rabbi in residence? Is that how it worked?

Lurie: Yes, exactly.

Glaser: You also formed a junior congregation?

Lurie: No. There was some kind of couples group, which I worked with. I didn't initiate it; I think it was initiated by Rabbi Zionts. It was a very modest endeavor.

Glaser: If you hadn't gone on to New York, to that position, would you have stayed in the rabbinate?

Lurie: Well, it's an interesting question. In the Reform movement, I don't know anything about the others as far as placement, there is a rather rigid placement structure once you get into the rabbinate. Everything is determined by years of service or years after graduation. As I said to you, I loved the practical rabbinate. But I have almost no patience to go through this kind of unionized process of earning your stripes by virtue of longevity. I don't believe in it. I never accepted it, and at this moment in time I also don't accept it.

It's consistent with my whole life, except I did believe you had to go to get your undergraduate degree, and I believed that you had to go and get your other degrees. But I wasn't a great class attender either. In other words, if I could learn without

going to class, I liked that better. As a consequence, I missed a great deal of my last two years in college, and whenever I could I would miss classes at Hebrew Union College.

Glaser: And yet, you were the best student of your year. You got a scholarship to Israel.

Lurie: I was the best student going to Israel, I wasn't the best. Remember, I told you my study partners were the geniuses. I was not. I was a good student at Hebrew Union College. In fact, my last year I think I got straight A's all the way through, so I was a good student. But there were better students there. Michael Signer was far superior; I was not even in the same league. I am a good student and, conceptually speaking, I probably am a great student. But as far as the rote, I was good enough.

XI A MAJOR CHANGE

Leaving the Rabbinate

Lurie: At the end of my three years at Temple Emanu-El, when this New York offer came about it was very interesting but it was also very scary. I was going to be leaving the practical rabbinate, which I loved, and I was going to New York. Fundraising really was unsettling. The idea that I had to do a lot of fundraising made me feel very uncomfortable.

Glaser: Had you ever considered a business?

Lurie: No. I was interested in Jewish business. Jewish business that related to Israel was my primary interest. Yes, UJA obviously fit that bill, but there was a lot of fundraising in it and I was feeling negatively about that. Obviously, now I feel fine about that, but that's after years of being involved in it and being conditioned and understanding.

Glaser: You will have to tell me how the UJA offer came about.

Lurie: Let me finish with the rabbinate. I saw a congregation one time when I was visiting my uncle in Chicago. A congregation called North Shore in Glencoe, Illinois. A magnificent temple designed by a Japanese architect. Have you ever seen it?

Glaser: Yes, when I lived in Highland Park, Illinois.

Lurie: I saw that temple and I was so impressed. It was so beautiful and I was moved by it. I liked it. This was a major congregation that required you to be in the rabbinate for at least ten years and I had only been in three years. So I wrote a letter to the placement person and I said, "I have been offered a job at UJA-New York. It's a wonderful job. I'm to be the second person in an organization that employs over five hundred people. It's a very senior position. I don't really want to leave the rabbinate. But, frankly, there's no position that I could get after three

years that is even remotely as challenging as this one. However, if you would allow me to panel for the Glencoe job, I would be willing to do that. Otherwise, I am going to be leaving the practical rabbinate and I doubt I'll ever come back."

Glaser: What does that term panel mean?

Lurie: Panel means that you would just put my name on the list. The selection of a rabbi is up to the congregation. But if you are not on the panel, they can't even look at you. So I, as a person sitting out in the field, they wouldn't even know about me, and they couldn't look at me unless Rabbinical Placement put my name down. I said, "Just put my name on a panel." There were ten people, eight people, however many on a panel. I can't remember who it was; I think Jack Stern was the name of the fellow but I am not sure. He wrote me back this nasty letter, which I hope I saved, saying that it's a good thing that this was a personal letter because if my colleagues would know about it they would be furious at me. I have such nerve and how dare I ask for something like this. That was it.

So another road not taken. It wasn't that I was uninterested in the rabbinate. I just wasn't going to wait for ten years to try to be in a congregation where I thought I could really do something. It was very lucky that he said no to me. The congregation scene was not the right scene for me. In a congregation, you've got to be devoted to the families and to family life crises and celebrations, because that is what a congregation is all about. You see, I was mixed up. I had the days of Abba Hillel Silver still on my mind, where you could be both a congregational rabbi and a person involved deeply in Diaspora-Israel relations. Those days are over.

Glaser: Before we go on, I want to ask you to compare or contrast Congregation Emanu-El to Rabbi Silver's congregation in Cleveland.

Lurie: There was no comparison. First of all, at Emanu-El the focal point is not the rabbi. The rabbi is almost incidental. Yes, they care if they have a good one, but people sort of belong there. It's the biggest congregation; it's the most "prestigious." It's beautiful. There is a history of family involvement, et cetera, et cetera. Sure, it ebbs and flows as far as support because of the rabbi. If the rabbi is bad, people drop off. If the rabbi is good, they join. But it is less rabbi-centered than a lot of congregations, and a lot less rabbi-centered than The Temple was in Cleveland. There it was Silver's temple. I never heard anyone call Emanu-El Asher's temple. You never heard anyone call it any name of any rabbi's temple; not Reichert's temple or anybody. It was Silver's temple. This man dominated the congregation. That's one huge difference.

The other huge difference is that Cleveland is a much more intensely Jewish place. So Judaism is taken much more seriously than it is out here. The Temple, even though Reform, was a much more serious congregation. By the way, it is far larger than Emanu-El has ever been, far larger. I think my confirmation class was over 200 kids. We've never had anything close to that in the history of Emanu-El. Now they have confirmation classes of twenty or thirty or forty--I don't know what it is. When I was there, they were big and they were eighty. I think the biggest they ever had was 100, 110. Well over 200, maybe 250, was the top end of the confirmation class at The Temple. It was huge. A religious school of over 2,000. This was a big place.

Glaser: What was the total membership?

Lurie: I think, at that time, around 2,500 families. But families. I think Emanu-El has 1,600 right now, which is very big, but a lot of them are not families. They are individuals, or they are older couples, or whatever.

The Offer to Join the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York, 1972

Glaser: Do you want to tell me how the job in New York came about?

Lurie: Larry Myers' son Mark was on my first confirmation program to Israel. He was a great kid. He's a man now with children of his own, but he was a fine young man then. He went with me to Israel, and I liked him very much. I got to know the family very well, really through Mark. Larry is very enthusiastic about people that he thinks are good. He still is, by the way, to this day. Larry was very active with UJA and the Federation here. Much more so than synagogue. He wasn't really active in synagogue at all at that time. He has subsequently become a little bit more active.

Larry was on the Prime Minister's Mission and he was talking to a woman by the name of Elaine Wenik, Elaine Cyrus at the time, a woman who has had many national positions in UJA and her own federation, which is New York Federation. She is a lay leader, as is obviously Larry.

She was looking for somebody for UJA-New York, I don't know what position. My name came up, and Larry waxed enthusiastic about me and how I was so great. Then she went and sat down with Ernie Michel. Ernie Michel was also on the same Prime Minister's Mission to Israel and was the executive head of New York-UJA.

Ernie Michel is a survivor; Ernie Michel has played a very, very prominent role in the whole movement of survivors. In fact, he was the head of the first international conference they had in Jerusalem that was heavily televised. He's been a central player in the Holocaust movement--movement meaning educational, remembrance, et cetera. I'd say next to Elie Wiesel he is probably one of the most prominent people in that movement.

Anyhow, Ernie was the head of UJA and Elaine sat down next to him and said, "Ernie, I've got a guy for you to hire." She talked to Ernie about me; Ernie then got up and talked to Larry Myers about me.

I went to Israel with the summer program and then after the kids went home--I saw them off in London--I turned around and went to the Soviet Union for two weeks. When I came home, almost the first words of greeting were when Larry Myers called me and said, "Brian, you've got to meet this guy. He's got a great job for you in New York."

It was like a cold chill had penetrated my heart. Because then, as now, I don't have any love of living in New York. The idea of going to New York just really bothered me. But, obviously, it sounded interesting. So in October, after the High Holidays, I flew to New York and I met with Ernie Michel. That ended up being the place I went. I love Ernie. Ernie is a dear friend to this day. In fact, he called me this morning about another job.

Glaser: The offers are rolling in.

Lurie: No, no. This is the UJA.

Glaser: I'm confused about UJA-New York. I know that it had been the Federation of Jewish Philanthropy.

Lurie: That was a separate organization at the time. They were separate. The Federation of Jewish Philanthropies was for local; UJA-New York was only for overseas. Two separate campaigns run at separate times under separate structures with separate professionals.

Glaser: But UJA was the national UJA?

Lurie: No. National UJA is a different organization. This was the way it was in many communities, where they had a separate overseas appeal and another local appeal. In New York, they hadn't yet unified; they are now unified. There is now a UJA-Federation. At that time, there was a UJA of Greater New York, which is the organization I worked for and that Ernie was the head of. A man

by the name of Sandy Solander was executive for the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. During my tenure at UJA, they merged their campaigns because of the Yom Kippur War. That was the beginning of the merger. In fact, I'm the one who created the name for the merged campaign--the joint UJA-Federation Emergency Campaign, or some such name. That was my contribution.

So they were totally separate. I got to know Sandy there because he was on 59th Street and we were on 58th Street. One on the west side; one on the east side.

Glaser: But the merger took place after you were hired.

Lurie: The actual merger took place many, many years later.

Glaser: Then while you were there you were not working for the Federation, you were working for the UJA?

Lurie: For just UJA of Greater New York. Then there is the national UJA that relates to every Federation, not just the New York Federation or New York UJA.

Working Under Ernie Michel

Glaser: When you took up the position in New York, you were reporting to Ernie Michel.

Lurie: Directly to Ernie.

Glaser: What were your duties?

Lurie: It's a good question. It's sort of a funny story. Here is this fundraising machine. At the time I came, they were raising \$70 million a year annually, which was a lot of money then. This was 1972. I think here in San Francisco we were raising about \$4 [million] to \$6 million with this Federation at that time, but I'm not sure.

Anyhow, they were raising \$70 million. I had no fundraising experience to speak of, other than my humble solicitation of rabbis for that Chug Ivri fund, and really no experience in organized fundraising at all. Here I was being brought into the largest Jewish fundraising organization in the country. It was this huge staff; I said over 500 people worked there. People who had worked there for thirty, forty years. In fact, Ernie's number-one operational assistant was a fellow by the name of Murray Peters, who, I think, had worked for thirty-eight years at

the UJA--starting in the basement, in the stockroom. He worked his way up to basically being the operational guy who really ran the whole organization. I came in lateral to Murray as far as the hierarchy. People said, "Who is this guy? He's a kid. What's he doing? What's he going to do?" The joke around was that I was Ernie Michel's illegitimate child [laughter] because why else would I be hired.

The reason I was hired, that I can ascertain, is that Ernie, who was a victim of the Holocaust, had never had a formal education. He had a reverence for Herb Friedman, who had been the head of national UJA. Ernie had worked for Herb Friedman. Ernie had this thing about rabbis, about Jewish knowledge, about knowledge in general that he did not possess. So he was missing a piece of himself in his very important job. He felt by bringing me in somehow it would make him whole, because it was a whole side that he was just totally missing.

In life it doesn't work like that. You can't make yourself whole through someone else. You have got to deal with yourself. Yes, you can bring people in to complement your abilities; that's different. But now I'm being psychological with Ernie. I think that's why he hired me.

Glaser: Did your having the title of a rabbi add prestige to the organization?

Lurie: Absolutely not. Rabbis in New York City are a dime a dozen. The general disdain for people working in Jewish communal settings in New York is very high. They are treated very poorly. I'm going back to 1972-74 when I worked in New York. I don't think it's any different now, but I don't know first-hand. I'm not talking about the chief executive officer; I'm not talking about Ernie Michel. I'm not talking about the head of the American Jewish Committee and all the rest of these national Jewish organizations. They are treated well. But by and large the person working in the trenches is treated like shit. Deliberate. There is a whole dehumanization process in New York altogether. People are not treated well. People who are perceived to be salaried people of modest means, which is virtually all the people that work in the system, are basically the servants of the rich people that are the overlords, if you will. Common courtesy is not a big thing in New York.

There is a horrible demeaning process. It appalled me. I was treated differently for two reasons. One is that I was a freak. Yes, I was a rabbi, but I was a young rabbi; I was not a rabbi like they understood rabbis. What was I doing in this job? It was sort of like a mystery to everybody. So I had this patina of mystery about me and of difference. I have always held myself

a little bit apart, so it added to the mystery. I organized some very interesting projects there, which we'll come to. I was treated very differently. I was treated very well by the lay leadership. Unusual. It is an enormous problem of Jewish agencies being housed in New York City.

Los Angeles, by the way, has a little bit of the same. The Los Angeles Federation people are treated poorly. In San Francisco, you're treated, I believe, like a peer, a professional. Again, I am not talking about the chief executive officer; that's a different status altogether. I'm talking about personnel, the working rank and file.

That New York saddened me. By the way, it creeps in because the chief professional officers--not Ernie Michel--often ended up treating the staff with the same disdain that the lay leadership did. There was a guy by the name of Eddy Vida, a seasoned veteran, who was the number one fundraiser at the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. He was the number-two guy under Sandy Solander. Sandy was not a fundraiser; he was the overall executive. Eddy Vida, in staff meetings, would treat staff under him like shit. I remember the first meeting I went to, where he was demeaning somebody and I interrupted. I said, "I don't understand what's going on here. We are working for the betterment of the Jewish people. Eddy, if you treat Jews like this, it's a total contradiction of what we're involved in here. You're not trying to make Jewish lives better. It starts right in this room, Eddy."

He never did that again in my presence. But it was awful. I'm saying it's part of the syndrome there.

Young Leadership Development

Glaser: Tell me some of the projects you were responsible for.

Lurie: Well, it was really an idea that Herb Friedman had done, and he's the one who put it into my head, which is I should develop outstanding young leaders. What I did is I got a group of about forty individuals and their spouses who were very, very successful in the Greater New York area.

Glaser: How did you get to these people?

Lurie: One by one. I went out and I had lunch with them. When I met them I said, "I want to bring you into this new group."

Glaser: How did you know who to contact?

Lurie: All I had to do was look at the list of major donors to start with and see who their progeny were. Larry Tisch's son Andy was in the group. Mona Riklis Ackerman, Meshulam Riklis' daughter, was in the group. Bill Rosenwald's daughters Nina and Elizabeth were in the group. Then there were individuals in addition who did not have illustrious family names or major givers to UJA, but yet they themselves were going to be very prominent. A person I brought in who was not at that time involved at all in the UJA was a guy who would become the president of Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, Dan Shapiro. So I brought Dan and Ellen into this group. He said to me, "Brian, I don't have enough money to be a leader of UJA." I said, "Dan, you've got to start. You're too important."

It was a very interesting group. I gave them an educational set of programs that were just outstanding. We had all the best speakers who were in the New York area come to meet with this group, visiting Israeli dignitaries, et cetera. It was important, it really did create a certain kind of interesting group. Andy Tisch right now is the head of their campaign. I'm afraid that Mona Ackerman, who I became very close to, is more involved in other things, but she still is involved with UJA. A number of these people are key--Danny Shapiro is still a key leader in the New York Jewish community and also the national Jewish community. That was an important program.

Other Responsibilities

Lurie: They made me the head of cash collection, which was an horrendous job. I oversaw all missions. I oversaw the rabbinical department.

Glaser: What does being the head of cash collection involve?

Lurie: Not only do you need pledges but you have to get paid cash. So how do you get cash once somebody has made a pledge? That was my responsibility. I did it through other staff or I organized that effort.

Glaser: Did you have to hound people?

Lurie: You have to set up a method of hounding people and reminding them; starting with nice to being not so nice. In fact, I'll never

forget when Irving Bernstein, who was the head of national UJA, came and gave an inspirational speech to the staff of the Greater New York UJA, which was over 150 professionals, a big roomful of people. My job was after Irving finished to get up and make a speech about how we were going to do a cash collection. I noted the irony. I said, "Here Irving Bernstein, a seasoned fundraiser, has given the inspiration. I, a rabbi, am now telling you how to collect cash." That was one of my jobs.

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Glaser: About the missions to Israel, did you have somebody working under you?

Lurie: Yes, I had a lady by the name of Jane Rogul who was one of those people who is never wrong. This woman would misspell the word, and you would show her the dictionary, how it was misspelled. She would say, "I have a different dictionary." [laughter] There was no winning with Jane. She was not supervisable, let's put it that way. I could not supervise her.

There was a rabbi working under me to deal with rabbis in the greater New York area. All the young leadership programs reported to me and there were a number of professionals that worked in that area. Also I had, by the way, a radio program once a week for almost half the time that I was there. It was a UJA-sponsored radio program.

Glaser: Were you the speaker?

Lurie: I was the interviewer; I was the host.

Glaser: Was there a speaker's bureau that you were responsible for?

Lurie: I was not responsible for the speaker's bureau.

Suggested Changes

Lurie: Then I tried to do two unusual projects. The minor one was that I said to Ernie, "Have you ever done a cost accounting analysis of what individual fundraisers bring in versus their cost?" The answer was no. So I began to push to get that kind of handle because there were tons of fundraisers, but they were bringing in little tiny dollars. Their ratio of expense versus fundraising was enormous. It was a question of maybe redeploying staff to more productive fundraising areas. I was trying to show him that we were not emphasizing the right areas. This was just a simple

business procedure. Where I got it from, I don't know. That began to tick. I think subsequently they have done something like that.

But the other thing I tried to do was far more radical and far more substantive. The Greater New York UJA is the greater New York area, which includes Westchester, Long Island all the way through Suffolk County, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn, et cetera. It's enormous. By the way, there were no offices to speak of any place else but Manhattan. There was an occasional staff person that stayed in an area like South Shore on Long Island, but basically nothing separate. I think in Suffolk there was a person because coming from Suffolk was an hour, an hour and a half each way.

I said there should be a radical decentralization of the organization. I went about proving through statistics how few donors they had in these outlying areas, what kind of giving potential they could reach based on all kinds of studies as far as per capita wealth. I did a major study that was very conclusive. I think that without a shadow of a doubt it proved the case that they should at least experiment with decentralization.

The concept was that Manhattan would become a service center for maybe five or six different decentralized offices. It wouldn't be a radical decentralization but it would be far different. You go out where people are. Also, I showed statistics of how many people came into Manhattan from these various areas. It was shockingly few. In other words, most people worked in the areas where they lived. People in southern Westchester came into the city, but most people either worked in Westchester, worked in New Jersey, worked in other places. The idea that you could get them in Manhattan was silly. It just wasn't the truth. It was even more extreme in places like Suffolk, et cetera.

There was an executive staff of around thirty-five. At an executive staff meeting, which was called for the purpose of discussing this concept, I presented a five-, ten-page paper with all kinds of data, et cetera. I had said to Ernie before the meeting, "Please, Ernie, let this just be a discussion. Don't you come to a conclusion. Let's just talk it over. I've done a lot of work on this, and I don't want to see it just wrecked overnight. If you jump in, it's going to be wrecked. I promise you." We go into the meeting and everybody has a chance to go around.

As I recall, there were only two people that supported the paper, maybe three, out of the thirty. One guy was the head of data processing, a terrific guy who had helped do the statistics with me and was convinced that our present structure was wholly

inadequate. The second person was the guy who was the most successful outreach worker already, who lived on the South Shore. I think there was a third one.

But Murray Peters, who was the operational head, and everyone else of that senior staff absolutely pooh-poohed the paper. "Nonsense, not true, this is the best way, the most effective way." Then it came to Ernie. Ernie said, "Well, we've heard enough. I guess this isn't going to work." I jumped up and I said, "Ernie, you're breaking a promise to me." "Oh. Oh." Then he sort of drew back.

Virtually nothing was done while I was there, and I was only there for sixteen months. Well, they have to a degree decentralized now. There's a major office today in White Plains and there are offices in other places--Suffolk has it. So they've got some, but nothing like I was suggesting.

Glaser: It took about ten years to do it?

Lurie: Yes. That was basically what I did.

Reaction to Job

Glaser: Did that defeat color your enjoyment of the job? You must have been frustrated.

Lurie: I hated the job. Hated it.

Glaser: And before that happened?

Lurie: Well, period. It was the most difficult time in my life. My father had died the beginning of '72, right after the birth of my first son, which was February 2. I was moving to a place that really was alien to me and to my family. From really the most beautiful place in America to live (forgive me, I don't want to say a cesspool), but for me far less. I was changing jobs. I had this tremendous ambivalence about fundraising, and this was a fundraising job. Again, leaving a job I loved to a job that was a big question mark, strange city, newborn child, death of father.

In fact, there was this interesting stress indicator at the time in New York Magazine. It gave different points for different life changes: if you have 250 points, you should take it easy; 350, you need to go on a vacation; 450, you should see your doctor; and 550, you should call the undertaker. I was something like 650. I was off the charts, because shortly after I moved

there I caught mononucleosis for the second time. So I was also ill for the first two months of my job.

Plus, it was a total hostile environment. Everybody there really--. It was a combination of envy and hate: "Who is this punk?" All these people worked very hard to go up the ladder in this organization. Murray Peters worked there, as I said, for thirty-eight years. "Who is this guy?" It was a very hostile environment. I'd say that sixteen months later I'd made a lot of friends and made a lot of headway and I think people felt differently about me. It was not a pleasant experience, but it was an enormous learning experience. If you ask, "Did I do more for UJA than they did for me?" No. I learned much more there than I gave back.

XII THE SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH WELFARE FEDERATION

Executive Director to Louis Weintraub, 1974

Glaser: Are you also saying that you couldn't have done this Federation job if you had not had that experience?

Lurie: I absolutely could not have done this Federation job without that experience. When I came back here I was thirty-one. I was the youngest person in the history of the federation movement to take over a major city job. If I hadn't had at least this patina, this immersion in Dante's Inferno, fundraising, I would never have been able to do the job.

Glaser: How did the job with the San Francisco Federation come about?

Lurie: Well, I think it's fair to say that from the time that Sanford Treguboff stepped down and Lou Weintraub took over there were a number of very disgruntled lay leaders here about Lou Weintraub's ability to handle the number-one job. I think it's just simply said, without going into the merits or demerits of Lou Weintraub. Lou was so stressed in the job; it was really more than he could handle. I don't know what kind of a second person he was with Treguboff, but he was a second person for many, many years with Treg. He really wasn't a very good first person here and the lay leadership saw that.

I had begun to know Jesse Feldman very, very well. Actually, we had met in San Francisco, though he was not a member of Emanu-El but a member of Beth Sholom. He and I began to see each other regularly when he would come to New York. People like Larry Myers and Richard Goldman and Jerry Braun--these are all Federation leaders. These people very much wanted me to come back to work at the Federation. I wanted to come back to San Francisco. Though I was learning in New York, I was not happy in

New York; I was very unhappy. My wife was dying to come back to San Francisco.

Glaser: But didn't you have a three-year contract at the UJA-New York?

Lurie: No. I had a one-year contract; I did not have a three-year contract at UJA-New York. No, I'm almost certain I did not.

Glaser: Jesse Feldman told me that.

Lurie: I had a three-year contract when I came back here.

Glaser: He said that when the merger took place you were told that there would be a place for you. But if you wanted to leave they would release you from your third year of a three-year contract. Is that a mistake?

Lurie: I remember I had a three-year contract when I began back here. What I had when I went to New York, I do not remember. They were releasing me early from a year contract; I don't remember the three-year. He might be right; I just don't remember. But they did release me from the contract that I was in because I left after sixteen months, and I was just beginning my second year there.

Glaser: What was your title when you came here?

Lurie: It was an odd title: executive director to the executive vice president. This was a complicated negotiation between Lou Weintraub and Jesse Feldman and Brian Lurie. I was not going to come under Lou Weintraub's direction when I came back here. It was clear that that would not work. So Lou needed some face-saving device. The title was one of his face-saving devices--that he was the executive vice president and I was coming in as something under him, title-wise. Ergo, executive director to the executive vice president. Obviously everybody would never add the last words and would just say, "He's the executive director and Lou is executive vice president." Which was fine with me.

The contract that Lou Weintraub signed stipulated that in all the areas of fundraising, planning and budgeting, hiring and firing of staff I would only consult with him, but I would have the final authority. From the point of view of power, he was relinquishing to me all the central powers of his CEO position by contract. He signed that contract.

There would have been another way of doing it. That way of doing it would have been they fired Lou Weintraub and gone on a national search. Then Brian Lurie would not have been hired, because I just wasn't senior enough. I didn't have enough

experience. But I have to say that people like Jesse and others, who really believed I could do this job and really wanted me to do this job, figured that the only way they could get me there is some kind of relationship with Lou where he remained in place. Where we preserved the veneer that I was a second person when, in fact, I was running the operation and had a senior person to advise me, namely Lou.

By the way, his advice was worth the title. He had no advice. The man was trying to undermine me from the day I arrived here. It was a very difficult relationship. He wouldn't share information that I needed to do my job. When I came he had a policy that all mail would be opened in his office. Any mail for anybody on the staff was opened by him, which I absolutely took out of his control. Everything that was addressed to the executive director he got, and he didn't show me what it was. All kinds of national information, all kinds of information about what's going on, such as fundraising around the county, I never knew any of the stuff. Never had any of it. He withheld all of it.

Glaser: What did you do about it?

Lurie: Well, one day I finally found out that he was withholding information. I went into his office and I said, "Lou, I've had it with you." He said, "I'm on the phone," and in the midst of anger, he threw the phone at me. I'm not faulting Lou. This was an impossible situation. Yes, it worked to allow me to come back here, but it was destined to end up in the way it did, which is that a year and a half after I came back he was pushed upstairs.

Relations with Lay Leaders

Glaser: Before Lou was pushed upstairs, what was your relationship to the current president and to the board?

Lurie: The current president was Jesse Feldman.

Glaser: So that was okay.

Lurie: It was wonderful. And the immediate past president was Mel Swig, and that was a very warm relationship as well. Although he and I had crossed swords on several occasions about day school education. He was very much against it and I was very much for it, and I was a lay person at the time I was here.

But there were skeletons in my closet because I had had some difficult times with people like Renny Colvin, who was a vice president of Federation at the time, and with Joe Asher, who was the leading congregational rabbi. We did not have the smoothest of times at Emanu-El. Renny was a president of Emanu-El when I was there, and Joe Asher was obviously the senior rabbi.

Renny Colvin came to see me one Sunday morning after I gave a sermon on Saturday at Emanu-El. He sat down in my living room and told me that I was undermining a campaign that he had started for capital improvement of the congregation. At that time I had talked about how it was more important to put money into programs than bricks and mortar. Now my intention was not to undermine; I most certainly understood why he thought that, especially in retrospect. But it wasn't even in my mind, this capital campaign. I was just trying to make a point that unless the congregation invested in programs like confirmation in Israel--this was in '69 I was giving this sermon--there would be no future at the congregation. That you had to have quality programs to instill Judaism in kids, otherwise there was no Jewish future in this town.

Glaser: Was Renny Colvin on the board?

Lurie: He was the president of Temple Emanu-El at the time.

Glaser: No, when you came back, was he on the board of the Federation?

Lurie: I think he was going off. He was a vice president of the Federation, I think, at the time that I was hired.

Glaser: Did you have difficulty with him at that time?

Lurie: Well, he was going off the board, and Renny never served again on the board during my tenure here. That was his choice, not mine. I went to see him and I said, "Renny, you're a very important person in this community. You and I have had differences, but I think we should put them aside and you should come back and be involved in the Federation." "No, Brian, I'll watch." So it was his choice to stay out of it.

Making Changes

Glaser: When you came on board, what programs did you institute? Were there new things that you brought about in that first year or two?

Lurie: Well, the first thing that I did was that I basically changed the staff of the Federation. There was almost a total staff cleaning. The staff that I found here was totally inadequate or largely inadequate. There were some exceptions like Seymour Kleid and Nat Starr. But, by and large, most of the staff was not very competent. So on one day, I think it was a bloody Wednesday, I let three people go. This was when we didn't have a very big staff, so three people was a big percentage of the professional staff at the time.

Glaser: Did you have any difficulty from Lou Weintraub about that?

Lurie: No, he just watched, because the people I brought in were tremendous. One of them was Wayne Feinstein. Wayne is now the Los Angeles Federation executive. I brought in Norman Rosenblatt, David Saks. I hired Marshall Kuhn full time. These were all people of real ability and merit; a totally different kind of quality than what was normal here.

Glaser: What are the pros and cons of hiring a lay person and making them a professional?

Lurie: It's a very difficult question. I think we should save that. You should write it down and save it. That's an hour discussion. I can't give you a quick answer to that; it's very complicated.

In any case, the first thing that I did was change the professional staff. I brought in a group of my people. They were good, they were aggressive, and they were out there to raise money. Our first goal was to change the giving profile of this community. I'd say that the first five years that I was here that was my goal, to make this into a much better giving community.

Raising the Level of Fundraising

Lurie: The first campaign we got into was the Yom Kippur War itself, where we came in and we did an add-on to that campaign, which probably produced another \$1.5 million over and above what was being raised. Instead of raising maybe \$10.5 million, the community ended up raising over \$12 million for the Yom Kippur War.

Then, my first full campaign here, our Federation among major cities maintained the level of the Yom Kippur War better than any other Federation. If most Federations doubled the campaign for the Yom Kippur War, they went almost back down to the level before. We went from \$6.6 million to \$12.2 back to almost

\$10 million, I think, \$9.9 million. We were much closer to \$12.2 million and much further above the \$6.6 million than any campaign of other major city Federations.

The way we did that was by being very innovative and, frankly, it was the best campaign I ever ran as far as strategy. First of all we got a huge subsidy for a mission from our Federation. It was the first subsidized mission of its kind in America. We sent sixty people, called the Advance Sixty, to Israel under Ken Colvin's and Norman Rosenblatt's leadership--one professional, one lay person. They went out and they recruited people. To go on the trip, these people had to solicit twenty cards when they came back.

What it did is that it totally changed the mid-level giving profile of this Federation. People who had gone from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for the Yom Kippur War were solicited by this group that came back, and they ended up giving \$3,000 or \$4,000 the next year. Instead of dropping down, they increased this whole mid-level of giving. That was a result of this one tremendous innovation.

The second thing is we took our major donors, the very largest donors, and we solicited them to give less than they gave during the Yom Kippur War, which totally threw them off. Take Walter Haas, Sr., who was the largest individual donor here. He had gone from either \$500,000 or \$550,000 to \$1 million for the Yom Kippur War. He thought we'd ask him for \$1 million. What I did is I strategized with Jesse Feldman, who wasn't really a solicitor but he was the president of the Federation at the time, and the campaign chairman, Doug Heller.

Doug Heller and Jesse Feldman went to solicit Walter Haas, Sr., and they said to him, "You made an incredible jump in your gift and we understand that you're not going to maintain it." Now we knew he was going to go back to \$550,000 in his mind. So what we did is we asked him for \$750,000. That was a little psychological ploy. He was so surprised; here we were giving away a quarter of a million dollars that we weren't trying to ask him for. He gave the \$750,000.

We did that all the way along the line of all these major donors, the same strategy. We asked them for less than they had given during the war but more than they had given in their year before campaign. What it did is that our middle campaign went up. Our major gifts went down but went way above where they had been before. As a result, we changed the giving profile of this community in one year.

You talk about breakthroughs as far as fundraising--I've never seen anything quite like that by any Federation before or since, including my own. We've done some great things here, but that was the best single campaign achievement.

Glaser: Are you sure you didn't study psychology in college?

Lurie: I had 101. [laughter] It was fun; it was the most fun campaign, too. But maybe your first is always the most fun.

Glaser: Well, when it's that successful, of course it's fun.

Lurie: That put this Federation on the map. That changed the way people looked at us. They used to look at us as, "San Francisco, you can't raise money. Look, you're not raising anything. Of course you don't have any collection problem." New York had a big cash collection problem; San Francisco had no cash collection problem. Why? The story was San Francisco wasn't raising enough money. You only had a cash collection problem when you're raising a lot of money. That was dramatic.

We emphasized fundraising for the better part of five years. My statement was the community building follows fundraising. If you fundraise enough dollars, you build your infrastructure as a natural course of that.

Glaser: How do you feel about a lot of smaller gifts verses one or two very major gifts?

Lurie: What's axiomatic in fundraising is 5 percent of the donors give 85 percent of the campaign.

Glaser: But there are those who feel that if you encourage the small donor eventually their giving will be raised and you will get more.

Lurie: There are two different issues. Issue number one is how do you raise maximum dollars. You don't raise maximum dollars from Amcha--from the people. You raise maximum dollars from a few individuals. The nature of wealth and the spread of wealth in this country is so tilted to extremes, if you will. The major givers, the people that are worth a half a billion, a billion dollars, two billion dollars, their giving capacity is so enormous that they dwarf what a whole community can do, if it works as a community as far as fundraising.

Let me give you one example in this town. Joseph Koret. Here's a man that during his lifetime was not a terribly generous man. His wife dies and he sets up a private foundation with her estate. He dies and leaves the balance of his wealth, basically, to this private foundation. Today the Koret Foundation is

somewhere between \$150 and \$200 million. It gives away annually roughly \$12 million, half to the Jewish community. This is from one person. Six million dollars, which is almost double what the Oakland Federation raises from the whole community of 60,000 people. Now am I making my point? So from the money point of view, an individual can raise more than a whole community.

Glaser: We're going to stop.

Staffing

[Interview 5: May 15, 1991] ##

Glaser: Tell me about staffing the Federation.

Lurie: Staffing is where you should always start, though the lifeblood of this organization is the volunteers. Without volunteers committed to this organization there is no organization. Because the lifeblood is the money that the volunteers give and the effort that the volunteers use to help raise money and to make decisions. I would say the single most important thing is staff, because unless you have a quality staff you have nothing. Your lay people give x number of hours but they don't live this job. So my first concern was the staff.

What do I look for in a staff person? I look for somebody who is a committed Jew. That's true of every person I hired on this staff, with very few exceptions. Some of the exceptions are in the technical area, such as communications and public relations. But even there you have to have a kind of Jewish feeling. The director right now of our department of communications and public relations is a non-Jew. But he is an altruistic, cause-oriented wonderful human being.

Glaser: What's his name?

Lurie: Mike Welch. He is the one exception to my statement of skilled positions. In accounting it doesn't really matter so much. But in all the campaign planning and budgeting, et cetera, they've always been Jewish and committed Jews. I have always hired very committed Jews. Good with people, people-friendly, open, intelligent. I believe anybody can be trained on the job as long as they have those qualities. I've taken many people from different walks of life and done it.

Glaser: What is the best relationship between staff and volunteers?

Lurie: At best there is a partnership where one hand is helping the other and vice versa. There are times where staff make mistakes and lay people come in to correct and to modify and to help. So it clearly is a partnership.

Glaser: If there was a conflict, how was it resolved?

Lurie: Are you talking about on my level?

Glaser: On the staff level.

Lurie: I don't understand the question.

Glaser: If you have somebody who is in charge of working with volunteers on the campaign and there happens to be a conflict, how would that have been resolved?

Lurie: By bringing other people in and having a vote. Nobody wins.

Glaser: What do you mean by bringing other people in?

Lurie: I can't even think of a time where it's happened. I only can think of one person, in my entire tenure here, where there was a conflict like you're suggesting with staff. That was between Richard Goldman and me. He and I agreed that if we did not agree on something that we considered to be important we would take it to the executive committee. On two occasions that happened, and each time I received 100 percent backing from the executive committee. That's the only time I can remember.

On the campaign level, we've never had a situation. We talk it out. For instance, if there's some disagreement it usually ends up in my room; we talk and we come to a resolution. I can't remember a time where there was ever any real difficulty, ever. This is any department. We've never had a situation where a lay person has dug in his or her heels and said, "No. That's wrong. I'm not doing it. I'm not part of it. I'm out of here." It doesn't happen.

Anyhow, you start with a quality professional staff. Staff has grown as the Federation has grown. When I came here this was a sleepy Federation. Sleepy. It had an annual campaign of around \$6 million. It had no offices outside of the central office. The Jewish infrastructure was modest. Yes, there was an excellent home and an excellent hospital. There were Jewish Community Centers, but the Jewish Community Center at 3200 California was a run-down center. There was no campus in Marin; there was no Schultz Center on the South Peninsula. There were no day schools, no physical day schools. There was no Federation building; there was no museum. There wasn't much.

The Endowment Fund has gone from a neglected \$7 million. I say neglected; nobody even paid any attention to it. There was \$7 million, which was not bad at the time. Today there's a \$90 million Endowment Fund, so you treat it a little bit differently. It relates to growth. The size of the staff is commensurate with the growth of this Federation and the nature of our demography, because we are long and narrow.

Glaser: Yes, but a lot of the things that you have cited have nothing to do with staff as such. The growth of the United Jewish Community Centers has nothing to do with your staff, does it?

Lurie: It has everything to do with our staff. Why do you think it grew? Who do you think was the driving force behind the South Peninsula, the Schultz Center and that campus in Marin?

Glaser: But you don't man that with your staff, do you?

Lurie: We certainly do. I spearheaded the campaign in the South Peninsula personally. Nat Starr was the staff person for the Federation in the campaign that led the way to having the Schultz Center. Marin, under Todd Stettner's direction there is Sandy Leib, who is working as the campus developer. It's a Federation project as far as resource development. That's the way we've done major campaigns for agencies that don't have a history of fundraising. The hospital and the home don't need us. Every other agency, we are intimately involved in any kind of major expansion with them.

Glaser: You're talking about capital fund drives.

Lurie: Capital fund drives. Any kind of major programmatic changes. Federation is integral in that. We don't run the programs, but we definitely are a part of that expansion.

Glaser: What about your quotation, "I spin them in and spin them out and they are all over the country", as far as your turnover of staff?

Lurie: That's not my quote.

Glaser: Oh, it's not?

Lurie: No. I could see where somebody would say that, but I have not said that. I don't spin them in and spin them out. If you look at this staff here, Nate Levine has been here seven years. Phyllis Cook has been here seven or eight years. Dean Kertesz has been here seven years. Stacie Sandler has been here ten years. The newest member to our top professional staff, Nancy Hair, has been here six years. On the top professional staff, the newest

person is Tracy Salkowitz and she's been here, I think, three years.

Now, do I have some very good people that are in other positions that used to work here? Wayne Feinstein is an example. He's the director of the Los Angeles Federation. Loren Basch is their campaign director. Ed Cushman is a director of the Orange County Federation. Others have taken national positions. There are some very good people out in the field. It's a matter of their own growth. These are people who either want to be executives or have a larger world to deal with, and there's no way to do it here so they have to leave. But that's their desire. The only people that I've spun out of here prematurely were people that I didn't think were up to the job. That's a different thing.

Glaser: In the case of Wayne Feinstein, when you saw he was ready did you encourage him?

Lurie: He needed to have a different sphere of activity and so, what I did is I placed him with the head of the Council of Jewish Federations, Bob Hiller. I called up Bob and I said, "I got a guy that you should hire." We sat and we talked about Wayne. He met with Wayne and he hired him. That was it.

Personal Management Style

Glaser: Would you discuss your management style?

Lurie: Very loose. I do not like supervising people, in the classical sense of supervision. I have no desire to sit down on a daily basis, or even a weekly basis, and talk to them about how they've handled different problems or different assignments. Couldn't care less. Then, in my opinion, I'd got the wrong people. I hire people who are competent, who can do it, and I give them the power to do the job in the area that they are in.

If they have questions, I expect them to come to me. I'm always available for any of my senior staff--the junior staff who want to see me, they can too--but I'm saying for the senior staff members, and there are about six of them, five of them, I'm always available to them. They have something they don't know or they want my opinion, they come here. That's my style of supervision. Total access to me, always here for them. If there's a problem, better come to me.

Glaser: And your running up trial balloons?

Lurie: That's my nature. I just have lots of different ideas, and sometimes I'm not sure about them. But instead of saying I'm not sure, I just say, "What about this? What about that? What about another thing?" And I watch and see what happens.

Glaser: Is your staff accepting of that?

Lurie: Well, it hasn't happened as much as it used to, I have to say. It used to be something where the new people would really be caught off guard because they would be seeing that and they would just be amazed. They would say, "Does he really mean that?" The old people would say, "No, he's running up a trial balloon. Don't worry; just tell him what you think."

The one thing that I hope has always been present here is people are totally free to disagree and to argue their point of view. Always. The history of this place is that. People do it in different ways. Mike Papo, the executive of San Jose who is now taking over the Koret Foundation, was another person that started here with me. Mike and I used to get into these things where I would say, "Mike, you're wrong," and I would just sort of wipe him out in an argument--orally. The next day I would come to my office and on my chair there would be a sixteen-page handwritten paper proving to me why I was wrong.

Hopefully, I fostered that kind of dialectic, if you will. Boy, I'm not always right. I'm often wrong, so I listen a lot.

Glaser: I've been told that you started the process of having your staff alternate sitting in on board meetings and committee meetings.

Lurie: I'm sure there were some staff that in Lou Weintraub's day had sat in. But what I did is I made it--and that was, by the way, one of the issues that Richard Goldman and I disagreed on. He did not like all the staff in executive committee meetings and the board meetings. I said I want them there because it gave them a sense of dignity, gave them a sense of partnership. It wasn't they got so much out of the meeting as far as substance. The issue was much more of appearance and of status. That was an important issue. That was one of the issues I told you about disagreeing with Richard Goldman. The executive committee totally sided with me. They weren't saying, "Richard, you're wrong." They said that if the executive of the Federation believes that it is necessary for staff morale, we've got to allow him.

Glaser: Was it also a way for the lay people to meet the staff?

Lurie: That's not a good way. It's not a good way, because you're sitting in the board meeting. It's not a good chance for interchange in the meeting. It's much better they take them out

for lunch, or they sit down with them and have breakfast, or they go to their office and spend an hour. So it isn't a good way. But, on the other hand, in the lay person's mind that staff person isn't important enough to be sitting at the board meeting.

Glaser: I see your point.

Lurie: So that's why it became an issue.

Qualifications for Top Positions

Glaser: You wanted to postpone talking about the pros and cons of taking a lay person and putting him in a staff position. Do you want to talk about that now?

Lurie: I'll be happy to. There are more pros than cons. The reason I say that is because the nature of this field is such that it has enormous paucity of good people, quality people, on the executive level. The kind of skills, the kind of commitment, the kind of ability, the kind of stick-to-itiveness--you don't have a whole lot of good people. For the head of national UJA there should be twenty candidates from the field. There is only one. That isn't right. Sure, it's very nice that I don't have to run against other people within it and outside it. As I said, there's a search process that goes outside the field as well. That's not healthy. That means you're not developing staff.

It's just like here. If we didn't have somebody who was seriously competing for my job from within, that would be a tremendous statement of failure on the part of me and this Federation as far as developing staff. Nate is a very serious candidate for the job.

There is nobody within UJA who is a serious candidate. My colleague in Chicago was the only other one that was considered. But, in truth, though he is a great executive he's not qualified in my opinion to be the head of UJA at this moment in time because of his lack of real experience in Israel and his lack of involvement in Israeli life, et cetera. That's a shame.

Glaser: On the lower level, on the Federation level, isn't there a school that turns out Jewish communal workers?

Lurie: There are a bunch of them. Most of them still have the social work degree as the major degree that the field requires. I have always felt that that is a poor degree to bring somebody into our field. Mind you, there are exceptions to every rule; there are

some great people in the field that were social workers. But it's almost axiomatically the wrong kind of person coming in. Federations need entrepreneurial types today. Federations need people who are politically savvy. Federations need gutsy people who can run and move and really take on challenge and conflict. Social work schools don't draw those kinds of people.

Glaser: Is training in the field of communal work the same as social work?

Lurie: That's a hybrid. That's better. I think you need communal training, and the School of Jewish Communal Work in Los Angeles has a master's program without social work. But in most of the schools social work is a part of it. Social work is of the thirties, it's not what the Federations are today. Federations are huge businesses, Jewish businesses. That's why I said a committed Jew comes first. That's the most important thing; without that, forget it. I would say a committed Jew is a knowledgeable Jew. You just can't be "Gee, I really feel Jewish." What does that mean? So you have to be a knowledgeable Jew as well to be a professional.

Again, we need a master's degree that is sort of an MBA, political science, communal work degree. Which I have opted for, and if I don't go into UJA one of the things I'll probably do is create such a school. I've talked about it for years.

Glaser: Where?

Lurie: That was one of the things I wanted to do at Brandeis. I still might do it at Brandeis even if I go to the UJA. We need something different than what we have. We're getting in, by and large, the wrong people for the field and then we're not maintaining them. The good ones we're not keeping in.

Glaser: That's very interesting. It sounds like it's a whole new category.

Lurie: It is. Look, I have nothing against Ami Nahshon. I think he is a very smart guy. I really do. But where is he coming from? He's a social worker who's running a business.

Glaser: Well, wouldn't his lay people fill that role?

Lurie: No, never. He's the chief executive officer. I'm making the same indictment about myself. I'm a rabbi. What in the world do rabbis know about running businesses?

Glaser: But you were a good poker player when you were young.

Lurie: I was a good poker player, but on the face of it I have the wrong training. And so does he. And so does Mike Papo, who is a social worker. Those are the three executives of the three Bay Area Federations, all trained wrong in my opinion. That's typical.

Glaser: But if you grew into the job, perhaps others do too?

Lurie: Whether about me or about anybody else, there are exceptions to every rule. But you can't live with exception if you have a big field. We have a huge field; we have several thousands, I think it's up to 2,000 people, working in the field today. You can't live with exceptions, you have to create a rule. You have to attract a kind of person, and that goes back to the question you're asking.

So we have many more lay people that are of that mettle than we have people who came in on the entry level. We have lay people who are committed Jews, knowledgeable Jews, passionate about what they are doing, care more about their voluntarism than they do about their jobs. Lawyers and doctors and business people who donate more of their time to Federation than they do to their businesses. If you brought them in professionally--Phyllis Cook is a good and bad example because she was a teacher. For her to come in is a little more like social work than it is like being a business person.

But I'm talking to a person who's got an MBA from Harvard, who is a business person in this community. I have encouraged him to come into the field because that type of person has a great future here.

Glaser: I saw, in the seventies, quite a number of women who went on to various kinds of professions after volunteering in the community. Volunteering seemed to give them the experience that was needed.

Lurie: Absolutely, it's very good for that. But that doesn't measure up to what I'm saying. In other words, those women are not running our Federations today. Frankly, they only have that background. We've got a woman over there who is running a big bank.

Glaser: Where is "over there"?

Lurie: Oakland. Marian Sandler. She can run any business, I would suspect. So this is not a women's thing. This is a matter of who's got the training. The women don't have it and the men don't have it, in my opinion.

I was sitting with a management consultant on Monday night at dinner, and the guy said to me, "Have you ever taken a Harvard course? There is a wonderful sixteen-week course for management

training." I've never done that. How do I have the nerve to run a place that employs over seventy people, that's complicated, that deals with thousands of volunteers, that has an annual budget of around \$4 million, that relates to agencies with annual budgets of over \$150 million, that has a huge endowment, that does capital projects that run between \$15 million-\$25 million a crack? How do I do this without more professional input? I should be disbarred from practicing unless I go back for mandatory training.

The system is not doing what it should be doing to create the kind of people that should be leading it. They don't have the background, and they don't have the updating necessary to be really successful at what they do. And I'm starting, again, with myself.

Volunteers

Glaser: But you're obviously satisfied with the volunteers you've brought in to this Federation.

Lurie: It's not been 100 percent. We have very good volunteers, but there is a major problem in San Francisco. The major problem is that we are so far from the mainstream of Jewish life. I'm talking about the people that basically are over the age of forty. They have had very little Jewish education and very little serious Israel experience. You find in the under-forty group, because of the confirmation in Israel program, because of OTZMA, because of studying in Israel at Hebrew University or whatever--you find that group being really far more equipped and far more knowledgeable about Jewish life than the older generation. It will make a big difference in this community. I predict that our lay leadership will get better over the next ten, fifteen years because of all these various programs that now exist that did not exist before. It takes a long time.

The confirmation in Israel program that started in 1970 doesn't really mean all that much to a community until those kids are really involved in the Jewish community. But if you think about it, it's been going now for twenty-two years. The kids who were fifteen when they went are now thirty-seven. It's getting close. Ten years from now they're probably going to be assuming key positions. Some have already.

Glaser: You're talking about a whole different change in outlook within the local Jewish community.

Lurie: Absolutely. Absolutely. Far less Holocaust oriented. Far more relating to Israel on a more straight, human way rather than reverential or just so thrilled that Israel exists. My father-in-law [Alfred Fromm] is sort of the hyperbole of this. He's just grateful that Israel exists. He is a German refugee and "God Bless Israel." He is a very intelligent man; I'm not suggesting otherwise, but everything else is secondary.

For this generation, it's how they relate to Israel. It's who they relate to in Israel. It's their friends in Israel. They are going to have a lot more peer relationships than the older generation.

XIII RELATIONS WITH FEDERATION BOARD

Attitudes Toward Israel

Glaser: In your early years, was there any difficulty with the board members because of some having loyalty to Lou Weintraub?

Lurie: Lou Weintraub was never a problem for me really. There was a problem that certain board members had with me and with my style at the beginning.

Glaser: What was that?

Lurie: I was very, very pro-Israel. We had a couple of key board members that really had great ambivalence about Israel. Lloyd Dinkelspiel, Jr., was one of them. Lloyd had great ambivalence about Israel. I remember at one of my first board meetings George Frankenstein and Lloyd Dinkelspiel almost got into a fist fight over the allocations because one said more to Israel and the other said less to Israel. It was really coming out of their own sense of Jewish commitment. George was passionately committed. And Lloyd was a brilliant guy, smart. He was a managing partner of his law firm when he died. But terribly ambivalent about his Jewishness.

John Steinhart, past president of the Federation, married to a non-Jew, non-Jewish children. Very ambivalent about his Jewishness and his understanding of what it was all about. I remember when I first got here he suggested we call off the annual campaign of the Federation because we were having a capital campaign. When I said to him, "How you going to do that? You're going to kill Israel." He said, "So they'll wait a year."

Glaser: And yet he was the head of three campaigns.

Lurie: Just shows you what the community had for leadership at that time. Now, it had some wonderful people, too. It had great people in the likes of Walter Haas, Sr., and Dan Koshland and Ben Swig, but it had a lot of these other people who were coming out of these terribly ambivalent Jewish relationships and families.

I don't want to overstate it, but that existed when I got here. Unfortunately, obviously, it was a tragedy, Lloyd died about two years after I came here. John Steinhart ceased being involved, I'd say five, six years after I came here. That group just sort of faded out.

Glaser: Have you served as an educator for the board because of your own commitment or passion for Israel?

Lurie: I suspect the answer is yes. I have done lectures to them on the whole Israel-Diaspora relations and other things. So, I have brought the board along with me. Always. Whatever I did which was controversial, I couldn't do by myself. If I did it by myself it would be totally unsuccessful. Because the only way I could have success in the national, international arena is if this Federation is committed to what I was talking about. That always meant that I couldn't get out too far ahead of my people. They had to either agree with me or change what I was thinking, to modify it or whatever, in order to have any kind of meaningful input and to do any of the things we did, which were controversial things. I had virtual unanimity here.

Glaser: Did that start right away?

Lurie: No. I spent really the better part of five years just making this into a fine campaign. This campaign was not a good campaign. It was a poor campaign when I came here. It had just a handful of major donors carrying the whole community. I think they had 11,000 donors when I came here. As I said, they raised about \$6.6 million. I really spent my time strengthening the campaign by hiring quality staff and improving the nature of the campaign.

Glaser: But as far as your educating the board with your passion for Israel?

Lurie: I can't rightly say back then, Eleanor, whether that was something or not.

Glaser: It must have taken some time.

Lurie: There were a lot of very receptive people. I don't want to make it sound like--. The board was almost always supportive, I would say, with the exception of the first year and a half where Lou and

I had a sort of ambivalent position and he was here. That caused tension. That caused some confusion. But after that, basically, there was no real problem.

Developing Leadership

Glaser: Tell me what kind of input did you have and do you have as far as bringing people along? There is always the process of "going up the chairs."

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Lurie: For the first five years I basically had a line-up that was just there and, actually, the presidential line-up was even longer. It was more like ten years. I had almost nothing to do with anybody for the first ten years as far as leadership. Something, but not really significant. They were here. Now, if I found good young people, I tried to get them going as quickly as possible. Or good middle-aged people.

We have a guy by the name of Steve Leavitt right now who is a good example, who is somewhat new to the Jewish community. I have, along with others, pushed him; he's now the head of UJCC. He's on the search committee for my replacement. He's a real outstanding guy. He's been fast-tracked. So I will, if I find somebody really outstanding, try to fast-track him for the top leadership in the community.

That I can do now. But that takes a long time, because almost anybody coming is dealt a certain hand; you have to make the best of it. Then you start implementing around the edges, and then you start mainlining new people in. The last six, seven, eight years--I'd say since 1980--I have had a lot to do with who the campaign chairmen are. And they have been more of a matter of choice. Presidents sort of rise themselves. I can't say I have done it. I can't say I've gone out and tapped somebody and said, "You should be president." Without exception they've just come up from the ranks. Look at the last two presidents. They were active in this Federation long before I came here: Annette Dobbs and Don Seiler. Don Seiler was chairman of an allocations committee that I sat on in 1971 in the Federation. He was my chairman. Annette, I think, at that time was either the president of the Women's Division or something.

Glaser: I think she was campaign chair.

- Lurie: I had something to do with her becoming campaign chair, but her involvement so pre-dated my coming. There is longevity here in the Federation.
- Glaser: Before you came the budget committee was a very good place to spot people and encourage them to move upward.
- Lurie: What I have done is I've used the campaign route to be much more important. If you don't raise the money, it doesn't matter what you do on the allocation process side of it.

Democracy in a Fundraising Institution

- Glaser: How democratic is a Federation?
- Lurie: Federations have a form of democracy, but they're most certainly not democratic in the way that you're using it. You go by consensus or by vote. The majority does rule, but the question is how do you get to be part of the majority. How do you get to be on the board, and that's not democratic. There is a kind of selective process that is definitely slanted towards people who are givers and people who work in the campaign. People who have a lot of potential both for gift and for work and for good judgment. The choice of rabbis or the Arnie Eisens of the world--the professors, the Brinners--they are important. They add a yeast to the dough, but if you don't have the dough--. First and foremost, this is a Jewish fundraising organization. You've got to raise money. Unless you keep your eye on raising money, you're not doing your job. That is not a democracy.
- Glaser: No. It seems to me that there is a conflict then between the democratic impulse and the concentrating on the big givers.
- Lurie: There really isn't. Let me explain how it works practically. Any good Federation director, if he has ten phone calls to answer back, is going to first call back his million-dollar donor instead of his \$500 donor. If he doesn't, then the guy is not long for the Federation. So in a fundraising organization you are going to call and relate to your major donor. They should have access to you like nobody else, but it doesn't mean they're right. There is a very big difference. Must they be heard? Absolutely. Absolutely. Should they always feel they are included in decision making? You bet your life. But should they have the definitive, the final? Absolutely not. Because if you do that then you have created just a pure oligarchy where the money rules. That's not the case in this Federation. It's never been the case in this Federation, at least in the time I have been here.

What rules is the best idea. What rules is the most persuasive argument. That is what a democracy at its best should be all about. Sitting around the table, whether it be an executive committee or a board meeting, it doesn't matter who presents. I don't care if it's Richard Goldman, Peter Haas, Mel Swig--the major donors. Their vote is only one. On several issues that I can quickly name, they have never, never won. One of them being day schools. None of these people are in favor of day schools. If you look at funding, their money is going more and more to day schools. If they were the kind of people who say, "That's against me. I'm picking up my money and leaving." They don't do that. In a sense, the will of the community rules where their money goes. I could give you other examples, too.

Yes, the nature of a Federation is it pays attention to the wealth, it cultivates the wealth. And yet it sets up a dynamic that its decision-making only takes into account to a degree that person with money. If it takes it to a great degree it makes a serious mistake, because then everybody else loses interest. All of your good lawyers and doctors and other business people, the professors or the rabbis, "What am I here for? If all you're going to do is listen to the million-dollar donor, I'm not going to waste my time here."

Glaser: Is the sequence usually that the campaign chairman gets to be president, perhaps if not the next year but subsequently?

Lurie: No. What happens here (that's something I never change) is the campaign chairman serves only for one year and the president is for two years. It takes years for somebody to become president after being the chairman. There's a big line of people that want to be president. We've always had at least five, six, seven people that want to be president of the Federation. We don't have the same number that want to be campaign chairman.

Glaser: I've been told that you work much harder being campaign chairman than you do being president. Is that so?

Lurie: It's not true. The president here really works hard. It's at least a 50-percent-of-your-time job. At least. This is a big operation. So much stuff happening it's almost unbelievable.

Federation Presidents

Glaser: Do presidents come into the office with an agenda, and do you help them if they have an agenda?

Lurie: Some presidents clearly come in with an agenda. Almost in every case they either get swept up in the movement of this Federation that's been created before them or by current events. Let me give you an example. Annette Dobbs had an agenda. Her agenda was to make closer all these disaffiliated groups that aren't that involved with Federation. All these myriad of organizations-- B'nai B'rith, Hadassah, Pioneer Women, ORT--bring them closer to Federation. A very good agenda. Also bring our beneficiary constituent agencies closer to Federation. More "create the family" than what existed. There's work to be done there, clearly. Important work.

So what does she come into. She comes into first the "Who Is a Jew" crisis. Then the local resettlement of the huge number of Soviet Jews coming in, that campaign. And then she got into Exodus--things you don't control. So her agenda sort of went by the boards. And she will say to you when one day you interview her, that she had an agenda and then, unfortunately, it was pushed aside by events. So that's one thing.

The other example is that during Billy Lowenberg's presidency we began this overseas committee process. Billy appointed the chairman, Richard Goldman, and the committee. The irony of that was that if Billy could have done what he really wanted to do, he would have disbanded it, because it ran contrary to his interests as far as serving on the board of governors of the Jewish Agency. He was held up, in his way of looking at it, to ridicule because our community had taken a position that was contrary to the international position.

We were being Peck's bad boy in challenging the system, and he got caught in between. Here he was on the board of governors, he was just a newly appointed member, and here was this overseas committee. And he was the president when this all happened. In fairness to Bill, he couldn't control this because it was a force that was established before he became president. Could he have somehow sabotaged it? I don't think so, even though he was president. He was stuck with it. I guess it was a shame that he just wasn't more adaptable.

Glaser: He must have had his blood pressure raised.

Lurie: He was a very unhappy camper. He wasn't too fond of his executive for quite a while. That was too bad. And I'm the one who got him on the board of governors.

Glaser: Is that right? How did that happen?

Lurie: Well, they called me--"they" being the nominating committee for the board of governors--that San Francisco had never had somebody

on their board. "Who do you suggest?" My first suggestion was Richard Goldman. He was a past president and very involved nationally, but he was not acceptable to them. He was too controversial.

Glaser: What made him controversial?

Lurie: He's very outspoken, very outspoken, very apolitical in the way he comports himself. If he believes something, he just goes out and says it. He doesn't think of consequences. That was true when he was president here, too. He rarely attached to his utterances the consequences of his utterances. If he knew how he projected himself to a lot of people, he might not say the things he says, because he's not insensitive at all. He's very sensitive to people. But he doesn't realize that he says certain things that make people say, "God, he just really insulted me."

So it's easy to understand how, in a national setting, he would really ruffle feathers. A lot of things he said were absolutely right. He was outspoken. He wanted Max Fischer to resign as the chairman of the board. He said, "Max, you've been there long enough." Well, that was it. Max Fischer would never allow him to do anything after that again on a national scene. Was Richard right in principle? Absolutely. The way he did it? Unheard of. Nobody ever did that. God bless him for doing it.

I said, "Richard Goldman should be the person from our Federation. He deserves it by gift, by involvement, by time, et cetera." No. Max vetoed Richard. The question came, "Well, then, who next?" So the next person they recommended was Annette Dobbs. I said, "Annette's not acceptable. She's yet to be the president of the Federation." If you're going to choose somebody to represent our community, if it's that important you have to choose the president. "Who's that?" I said, "Bill Lowenberg." "Oh, we don't know if that's all right." I said, "You've asked me as the executive of the Federation, and I've suggested one who is an immediate past president and you won't take that. Then you have to take the present president. I don't care what you've got to say about him." So they accepted him. Billy was put on the board of the governors. Billy was in the room when I had this conversation, he heard me. Everything I'm saying, he heard. That's life.

Innovations

Federation Retreats

Glaser: What were the new programs you instituted when you became the executive?

Lurie: You name it. There's a long litany of programs and institutions. Eleanor, I've had a hand in everything major that's happened here since the mid-seventies. Anything that has happened of any consequence in some way or another has probably involved me in it. Some, totally; some, tangentially.

Glaser: Do you want some time to think about that?

Lurie: That you can get from other people.

Glaser: Tell me about the retreats you instituted.

Lurie: Our first one, at Silverado, was with Yitz Greenberg, and it was the most memorable because it was the first. You have to remember--I talked to you about the old style of San Francisco leadership that was not terribly Jewish, not terribly sophisticated as far as Jewish content. Yitz, who is a brilliant thinker and very inspirational, spent the weekend with us at Silverado and there were about 100 of us. I don't know if you've ever seen him do this Hasidic dance where he leads it. The song that is used to really get you wrapped up is "Mi ani." And the answer is "Yisroel." "Mi anachnu. Yisroel. Mi ata. Yisroel. Yisroel, Yisroel, Yisroel." And that goes on and on and on. This litany, if you will, of "Who are we? Israel. Who are we? Who are you? Israel. Who am I? Israel." It is an old Hassidic jingle.

Well, he's leading this and here's this big Ichabod Crane figure and he's in the dining room, which has been cleared away and he is pounding with his huge size 15 feet [he stands up to demonstrate]. "Mi anachnu. Yisroel! Mi ata. Yisroel!" [laughter] You had people like Sylvia Stone, a lovely lady, a good Jew, but again, some ambivalence about Israel, active in Women's Division. I watched her, and she was well into her late seventies, maybe even early eighties, dancing behind Yitz Greenberg, yelling with the rest of us "Mi anachnu. Yisroel!"

It was unbelievable. It was something you never ever thought you could ever see. And here it was, going on. That was really memorable. It foreshadowed, if you will, the changes I'm talking about, because we weren't there. But yet this moment,

this Hasidic dancing of pioneer San Francisco Jewish families, was a kick.

Glaser: How many retreats did you have all together?

Lurie: Oh, we had lots. We did it for years and years and years. I think the largest one we ever had was over 400. We had Greenberg several times and we had Leonard Fein and we had just a whole bunch of people.

Glaser: Are you still having them?

Lurie: No. We stopped. What happened is that Silverado got so expensive that a weekend at Silverado was like going to Israel.

Glaser: Really?

Lurie: Not quite. But it could easily cost \$800-\$900 for a couple.

Young Leadership Development Programs

Glaser: I want to ask you about the younger people. For instance, the Young Adults Division and the leadership development committee.

Lurie: YAD existed before I got here.

Glaser: Yes, I know.

Lurie: The prime mover in that was Joyce Linker. She never gets enough credit. The person who gets the credit is Irv Rabin. Irv deserves credit, but Joyce is the one that really put it together. That started shortly before I arrived and it was up and running. All I did was encourage it.

Glaser: But you brought that into the Federation, didn't you?

Lurie: My recollection on that is that it was already in. The leadership development committee was just a program, sort of free floating, and then I brought that in shortly after I came here. In fact, a founder's meeting of that organization was in my living room.

Glaser: I thought that had started before you came.

Lurie: No. They were brought together as a group before I came, with lectures from Pollack and Fein and Ari Nesher. Those were, I think, the three lecturers that they heard. But it was an

informal-type group; it was not directly affiliated with the Federation. But the founder there was Ron Kaufman.

Glaser: And then was it brought into the Federation?

Lurie: Yes, it was, and I brought it into the Federation.

Glaser: You've got some new groups: the New Generation, Thirtysomething, Federation Agency Fellowship Program, UJA Young Leadership Cabinet, Chai Society, Jewish Community Involvement Network.

Lurie: That goes way back. That's pre-me now. Many of these things are staff-inspired that had nothing to do with me. These are new programs that come up that. It's not me. Other staff members have put these together, or lay people.

Glaser: But they are Federation sponsored?

Lurie: They are Federation programs, yes.

Glaser: Do you subsequently get leadership from these groups? Or are they too new for that?

Lurie: I have to say yes and no. I don't know. You would have to ask people that are more on-line with those programs. I'm not relating to them.

Menorah Park

Lurie: Coming back to your other question, Menorah Park was created--. Mike Papo was the key staff person in doing that and Gerson Bakar was really very key. So I would say that Mike and Gerson were the two most important people in developing that project. That was much more under my leadership. I got Gerson in to be involved and Mike was working, in a sense, under my direction, although independently. He went out and did this request for federal funding. He wrote the application.

Federation Headquarters

Lurie: Basically, this Federation building was my doing. The lay leadership agreed with it but I did it. The Jewish Community Museum is here because I insisted it be here. It was in fact my idea. The central address bringing agencies together, that was my

doing and my initiative. Virtually all the fundraising for this building, except for one gift, was raised by me.

Glaser: Did you have any opposition from other organizations about moving here into the central address?

Lurie: A little bit. When a key lay leader would call up the national office of American Jewish something or other, it was very easy to get them to come.

XIV FUNDRAISING AND ALLOCATIONS

Qualities of a Good Fundraiser

Glaser: You have already discussed fundraising, but there are some more questions that I have about that. What is the most effective way of raising money and what makes for a good fundraiser?

Lurie: The best fundraisers are a certain kind of person. They are people persons. They have to like people; they have to relate well to people. They are models of the giving that they are espousing, so it's "after me". You can't expect to solicit money unless you've given money, and given according to your ability. They have to practice what they preach. You have to be a role model.

You have to be a good listener. They really have to listen to what the other person is saying. Then they have to have enough of a security to know not to be afraid to be rejected. It isn't a personal rejection. A solicitor has to understand that a solicitee has the right to modify or say "no" to whatever the request is. Unfortunately, most people that do this take it personally. If they don't get what they ask for, or they get less than what they ask for, there is a terrible consequence.

One of the funniest stories about that is two very, very successful, very able people in this town went to solicit another person. The person that did the solicitation was Claude Rosenberg; the person that was solicited was Warren Hellman. Warren calls me up and says, "Brian, I am really in trouble." I said, "What's the problem?" He said, "Well, I just was solicited by Claude Rosenberg, and I know Claude. If he doesn't win, he's going to be angry at me and I don't want him to be angry with me."

All of a sudden, I get an emergency note. There is another call on the other line. It's Claude Rosenberg. I said, "Warren, hold on a second." I said, "Claude, how are you?" He said, "I'm terrible. I can't tell you how upset I am. I solicited Warren. We talked about going from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and he said he'd go to \$50,000. I said, "Hold on a second." So I put him on hold. I got back to Warren and I said, "Warren, you went from \$25,000 to \$50,000 with Claude, right? And he asked you for a \$100,000. Over the next two years, do you think you are going to get to \$100,000." He said, "Oh, yes. Over the next two years, yes." "So, \$75,000 next year and \$100,000 the following year?" "Yes, I would do that." I said, "Hold on a second." I put him on hold.

I said, "Claude, you succeeded." He said, "What do you mean I succeeded?" I said, "I've got Warren on the other line. He's prepared to do \$100,000. He's just going to take two years longer to do it than you asked. So he's doing what you want, and yet he's sort of doing it in his way. So you should feel good." He said, "Well, that makes me feel better." I said goodbye to Claude on one line and I said, "Warren, I just got off the phone with Claude and he feels much better now. You don't have to worry."

So it was a case of personal rejection. And a lot of people do that. I say the majority of people do that. Somebody says no to me, it doesn't mean anything. All it means is I've got to go to somebody else.

Glaser: It's hard not to feel rejected, though. It means that you are not a good salesman.

Lurie: Well, there are times when I am not good. I solicit people where I have been terrible and gotten tremendous success, and I've been tremendous and got no success. It's just one of those things. You cannot personalize it. It's larger than yourself. It's a solicitee's attitude; it's their financial circumstances. It's so many different things that roll into it. I'm asking for a lot of money. I'm not asking people for \$500 or \$1,000.

Glaser: Well, how involved are you as the executive?

Lurie: I'm very involved. Historically, I solicit most of the major gifts. I've personally solicited most of the \$100,000 gifts during my entire tenure here.

Glaser: Is that typical of most Federations?

Lurie: No. It's totally atypical.

Glaser: How did you get involved in that? Obviously by choice, but why?

Lurie: Because I was the best person to do it. If we had somebody else better, they would do it. Frankly, I am no longer the best person for some of these people, and in the last several years more and more of them have turned over to other people. And I honestly think they are doing a better job than I could do. But for a period of time, and in a given moment, I am probably the best solicitor in this town for major donors. For instance, in the Exodus campaign, I solicited every single gift of a half million dollars or over, and there were ten of them. Every one I solicited personally.

Glaser: Was this one-on-one?

Lurie: One-on-one.

Glaser: I thought big givers were solicited with two people going to call on the one person.

Lurie: That's usually a better way of doing it. I have gone many times with another person to solicit for an annual campaign. But in Exodus I didn't need any help. I could bring to the table such moral authority and such compelling need because I had just been in Israel, and I was in a sense the national spokesman for it. It just wasn't important to have anybody else with me. In one day I solicited four \$1 million gifts.

Glaser: Wow! I've been told that the reason for two people going to call is that two in the Jewish tradition represents community.

Lurie: It is true and it is better to have two because then it's less personalized as well. Remember, I said the big problem is you personalize things. If you have two people, it's more like a community soliciting somebody. And it's much harder to say no. It is. Again, in this I knew I was going to get--I was just certain. By the way, there were individuals who started lower than I wanted. I kept on re-soliciting until I got what I wanted. One of the \$1 million gifts started at \$600,000 and then went to \$750,000 and finally went to the \$1 million I asked.

Glaser: That makes you sort of a noodge, doesn't it?

Lurie: Often times a good fundraiser has to be a noodge.

Glaser: Don't you wear out the welcome mat that way?

Lurie: No. This person I have solicited for the better part of eighteen years.

Glaser: All right, some of the characteristics of a good fundraiser are that you have to be committed yourself, you have to be willing to

be turned down, and you have to be persistent. Are there any other qualities?

Lurie: You have to know your subject and what you are soliciting for very well. It's a psychological thing. When I solicited the lead gift for the Marin campus, I waited until three days before the major event to open the campus, and I knew the person I was talking to. The likelihood of his doing what I was asking was about 90 percent, simply because of knowing him and his own personal needs and what happened in his family. Now, with real intelligence and real sensitivity to that person--which I had; I liked the person very much. I knew his daughter died, and I was there at his daughter's funeral. It was held eleven months before that.

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Lurie: As a consequence, I sat down with him at breakfast and within five minutes he basically agreed to the gift, \$2 million. Because it fit; it was right. He had to go back and think about the economic ramifications of it. He called me an hour later to say to me, "Yes, you got it."

It typifies one form of major solicitation; that is it really is right and you know that it's right. Because a good solicitor is not just soliciting for a cause or for himself or herself; he is soliciting for the well-being of the person. If you couple that into the equation, that it's also for the well-being of the person, then the results are very different than most people see when they solicit money.

Glaser: How do you figure out how the well-being of the person ties into a gift to the Federation?

Lurie: Well, it's what they're committed to. At Super Sunday I solicited a guy who doesn't believe in umbrella fundraising but is totally committed to helping refugees. Instead of even bothering with giving \$1,000 to the annual campaign, he gave a \$100,000 gift to Exodus. He feels good about that. He's doing something for himself. This is what he believes in. Jerry, in giving a \$2 million gift in memory of his daughter, gave her name to the campus. It is the Lonne Celeste Hoytt Jewish Community Campus. He has, in a sense, immortalized his daughter in a place that he really believes is wonderful, so he feels good about it. Instead of giving away something he got something, something significant.

Glaser: You have to do your homework on the person to know what button to push, don't you?

Lurie: Yes, and what really they do value. That's why you have to be a very good listener, and good intelligence really helps. Anybody

who just says, "I don't need that; I just go in there." They're not good solicitors; they're flim-flam men as far as I'm concerned.

Glaser: How is the campaign cabinet developed and what's part of it?

Lurie: It's just people who have different positions within the campaign; it's a simple structure. The regional campaign chairmen, for Marin, Peninsula, North and South, City; Women's Division; Young Leadership; Major Gifts--it's a normal group.

Glaser: What's normal to you? I need to know.

Lurie: Just all the various divisions of the Federation that are involved. You can take it off of a letterhead.

Centralized Fundraising

Glaser: In the South Peninsula, you have all of the high tech industry, which must be a source for a great deal of fundraising.

Lurie: Yes, but you can do that with one person. You don't need three people or five people. There really is an economy that can be had by centralizing fundraising. You can do it dramatically too. In fact, one of the things I'm thinking about, if this UJA job comes about, is going to Federations and basically saying to them that all givers of less than \$500 will be centrally coordinated from the UJA. Can you imagine what that would mean?

Glaser: All over the country?

Lurie: All over the country. That we would do the direct marketing with that. We would do the phone calling; we would do the mass marketing. We would do everything from one centralized or several centralized areas.

Glaser: But don't you lose the personal touch in campaigning?

Lurie: What's happening is that there are so many people giving over \$500 whom the communities have to work with to cultivate to get them to give more. When a person would go up above \$500, they automatically fall into a Federation's catchment, and they begin to work on them. But the sheer problem of dealing with the masses is so enormous. It could be so much more effectively handled centrally than it is being handled by all these different Federations that are reinventing the wheel every year.

Glaser: Is that the group that gets contacted on Super Sundays?

Lurie: Yes, basically. It's crazy, but we would have been cheaper central and better.

Glaser: It sounds very impersonal to me.

Lurie: But it's not so personal right now. Most of these people are not personally seen. Very few of them are.

Glaser: Well, that's true.

Lurie: In this area, only something like 8 percent of the Jewish population gives \$500 or more to the Federation. Imagine if we concentrated on upgrading people over \$500. Let the Federations use their valuable time to raise money, not to go after numbers. Numbers don't produce money. We have already shown that. We did a similar thing, just as an example of this. Every one of our areas was handling all the givers in their areas, so Nate Levine said to me, "It would be easier if we just did it centrally." I said, "Fine, let's just do it centrally." He said, "We can't do it, they won't give up their donors." I said, "Of course they will. If they don't have to do all the work handling all the thousands and thousands of under \$500 donors in South Peninsula, North Peninsula, Marin, they can concentrate."

We took that over centrally. It's far more successful, produces far more money and far cheaper than the way it used to be.

Glaser: But you're one who is very concerned with Jewish involvement, and if you have a less centralized approach don't you get more people involved?

Lurie: No. We're talking about money; we're not talking about community development. You still continue community development for everybody. You don't isolate anybody as far as his giving level. A zero donor, a \$25 donor, a \$50 donor is still part of the community development process. But the fundraising piece of it is handled differently. They are different issues; they do relate, but they are different issues.

Glaser: Well, I see them as being very closely related. That he who gives, no matter how small, that's the first step to community involvement.

Lurie: Yes and no. Some people who just give money don't want anything to do with the Federation. That's most people. They clog up the arteries, if you will. They don't really do anything. But if you go out and sit down with a person and really cultivate that

person, then you can begin to get somebody who is involved. That takes real personal attention. It has nothing to do with Super Sunday or mail appeals. It has nothing to do with all the other things that we do to bring in most of our donors' money. I mean on the small end of it. That's not personal.

Glaser: It's a matter of education too, isn't it? Education to give and education to see one's role in the Jewish community.

Lurie: That's different. You continue that process unabated. Now, there are two areas that are better done nationally. That's one, in my opinion. And the other area that's done much better nationally is the major donors. Anybody that probably gives more than a quarter of a million dollars should not be solicited by their own Federation. A national program will clearly enhance their giving capacity.

Glaser: How good is the Jewish Bulletin in helping you raise funds?

Lurie: It's more educational. It doesn't help us raise funds; it creates a certain atmosphere. It's positive.

Glaser: There is certainly a lot of material on the Federation in the Bulletin each week.

Lurie: Yes.

Role of Foundations

Glaser: What is the relationship between the Federation and foundations?

Lurie: Which foundations?

Glaser: Well, I don't know how many foundations you're involved with other than the Koret.

Lurie: Well, there are a lot of private foundations that do Jewish funding. So we have informal relationships, obviously. Koret is more formalized because they are the single largest donor to the Jewish community. So we have staff meetings three or four times a year with Koret. We have lay and staff meetings with them to make sure we are in sync. Then occasionally Phyllis Cook sets up a meeting for private foundations that are interested in Jewish funding. We have programs for them--speakers that come in, like Gary Tobin sharing with them our demographic information. Israelis that are coming through that might be interesting to them, et cetera. But that's all very informal.

Glaser: What are the names of these various foundations?

Lurie: The Walter and Elise Haas Foundation, the Swig Foundation, the Osher Foundation, the Goldman Foundation, the Columbia Foundation.

Glaser: Do you tap the Zellerbach Family Fund?

Lurie: They are invited in too.

Glaser: The San Francisco Foundation?

Lurie: The SF Foundation, yes. That's about it.

Campaign Cabinet

Chairman's Advisory Council

Glaser: Ron Kaufman was the chairman of the Chairman's Advisory Council, which was part of the campaign cabinet.

Lurie: Forgive me, it was a gimmick, a good one, to get people who were not involved in Jewish community involved. He would go and meet with individuals that had high leadership/giving potential and cultivate them. That was his name for it. And it was good. It wasn't ever institutionalized.

Glaser: Was it long-lasting then?

Lurie: Ron was terrific at it; he is a wonderful guy.

Glaser: Good fundraiser?

Lurie: Ron is a good fundraiser, a high-quality human being, tremendously committed, self-effacing, really a good person.

Women's Division

Glaser: How do you view the Women's Division? I'm asking you that because one of your past presidents thinks it's a waste of time and money.

Lurie: That's Richard Goldman. I think it's been very important for the growth of this Jewish community. It has really helped fashion

communities in all of our regions. It has given us some of our best leaders--I'm talking about general leaders in the community. It has to be changed like any other organization. There are a lot of working women now who only see themselves as part of the family gift. You have to change with the times, so it should be modified. I think it is being modified. But done away with, no. I think that would be a big mistake.

Committee of 100, Social Planning and Budgeting

Glaser: You brought about the Committee of 100, which is now 120.

Lurie: No. I think Lou Weintraub did that. I'm almost certain he did that.

Glaser: It combined social planning with budgeting?

Lurie: Yes. It was an interesting innovation, and it got a lot of people involved in the process, and for a time, it was very healthy. Especially when there was constantly a lot more money to give away, as there was in my first ten years here. We had 10 percent or 8 percent growth in the campaign constantly, or 5 percent. We had substantial new monies always available. When you have new money, it's very easy and fun to be in this process. But when you have flat campaigns, as we have had for the past several years because of other campaigns--. We've raised a lot more money, but it's gone in earmarked directions. It changes the nature of that planning and budgeting process. But that was not my doing. The initiative for that came before I got here.

Glaser: But then you expanded it to 120?

Lurie: It was called the Committee of 120, but then it even got larger because we added overseas and it grew. I think at one point there were something like 140 people.

Glaser: Is that helpful in bringing in more people from the community?

Lurie: It definitely is. It is a good way to bring in new people, people without too much experience, or people with a lot of experience. That's a very important role.

Glaser: Do you also see people there that you feel should be encouraged to develop into leadership positions?

Lurie: Yes. Absolutely.

Glaser: What are the divisions within this committee?

Lurie: It's been changed. There were subcommittees, usually about six in number. There you have to just do your homework; I'm not even going to try to go through the subcommittees: group work and campus and community relations and interpretations, overseas. There were a bunch of different committees with chairmen. It's gone through a change now through our strategic planning process. We've revamped all that, and you best get that from Tracy Salkowitz. Much more inter-agency than what we have done historically.

Local and Overseas Allocations

Glaser: How are the funds divided between local needs and overseas needs, and what's your view of that?

Lurie: My view of that is that if you don't have a strong local Jewish community, they won't raise money for overseas needs. What I found here was a weak Jewish community that had to be strengthened, strengthened constantly. No real quality Centers, no day schools, no Israel program. Tons and tons of things missing that they desperately needed. That all takes money. The community's belief and my belief, it was one and the same, that you had to develop your local infrastructure in order to build a community here.

Glaser: I'm really surprised because I thought you would have emphasized Israel above all else.

Lurie: No. The allocations show just the opposite. In fact, the major question in my interview back in New York with the search committee for UJA is, "Brian, your allocations from San Francisco are unbelievably bad for UJA. How are you going to come in and be the executive and lobby for more money going to Israel?" Again, all you have to do is look at the record. Every year, the percentage going to Israel has shrunk, until Operation Exodus.

Funds from United Way

Glaser: Do you get money from the United Bay Area Crusade?

Lurie: Yes.

Glaser: Do you have to fight for it?

Lurie: No. No. It's relatively easy, but we are probably the poorest funded major city Federation in America, or one of the poorest funded. Federations in Cleveland and Chicago and Detroit get enormous funds. The little Jewish community of 60,000 in Cleveland gets over \$3 million from its United Way. It's easy for them to be more generous with Israel than we are because so much of their local needs are being taken care of by United Way, a third or whatever the number is. It's a big chunk. For us, I think it's something like \$600,000, so it's at best 10 percent of our local needs, it's far less than 10 percent. For Cleveland it's maybe 33 percent. There are many other examples. We don't do well for United Way funding.

Glaser: Yet, over the years, there's been a lot of Jewish leadership in the United Way.

Lurie: And if you look at the major donors to United Way, they're disproportionately Jewish.

Glaser: Do you think they lean over backwards because they are Jewish, not to stress giving to the Federation?

Lurie: No. What it is is that this United Way is much more involved in the have-not community. Rather than dealing with building on the establishment and giving to more of the established-type organizations, it has given to the non-establishment all the new dollars that have come in.

Glaser: So they see you as not needing so much.

Lurie: Exactly. By the way, it's a vicious cycle, because the leadership of the local Jewish community does say, "Well, gee, the United Way isn't really doing very much for the Jewish community, so why should I give to the United Way?" There is a reality in fundraising: if you don't scratch somebody's back, if you don't show that you care about them, why should they care about you?

Local Agencies

Glaser: Do you feel that local Federation agencies should serve the general community as well as the Jewish community?

Lurie: Their primary need is to serve the Jewish community, but then beyond that, yes, they should serve the general community as well.

Glaser: I imagine you'd find that more in the hospital than in any other agency.

Lurie: The hospital and the Centers do quite a bit of that. Those are the primary institutions.

Glaser: During your administration, you had some new agencies come into existence. The one that comes to my mind is the Vocational Service Agency. Did you have a hand in creating any of these new agencies?

Lurie: Vocational Service was the first one and I was the executive when it happened, but I didn't have anything to do with it. It was on line before, Marshall Kuhn was the prime mover of that.

Glaser: Do you meet regularly with the agency heads or the executives?

Lurie: Yes, I have, with several hiatuses. I met with them over a period of time: monthly, bi-monthly, whatever.

Marin had a little itty-tiny-bitty Center, and conceptually we came together with this idea of campus. So I was obviously involved and was a prime mover of that. The Schultz Center on the South Peninsula is something I pushed. Development of the day schools is something that I pushed.

Glaser: Did you ever have a role in removing an agency head, somebody you thought wasn't effective?

Lurie: I had a hand in it from time to time. Your agency heads are terribly important. You have very good ones in this town now, by and large. There are still some weaknesses, but it's a strong group. The Bureau of Jewish Education, the home, the hospital, Family Service Agency, Vocation Service. There is no director right now of the UJCC, but all those others are very good. Exceptional.

Glaser: If you wanted to get rid of an agency executive, did you have to do battle with the board?

Lurie: I have never done it directly. That would be stupid. Think, Eleanor, it is a political process. You have an independent board of directors, but on the other hand they are funded by the Federation. So what you do is sit with leadership and you discuss and all the sudden somebody is gone. But the board does it. It's not done by me, or not done by members of the staff. That's how you move directors on.

Glaser: Subtlety is the name of the game?

Lurie: A confrontation would be ridiculous. That hurts your community and you polarize people.

Glaser: Is it true that you're not committed to a social welfare agenda?

Lurie: To me, it's a secondary issue compared to the primary issue, which is Jewish identity and Jewish affiliation. Jewish identity and Jewish involvement is much more important. Mind you, I'm not talking about the lower strata. I'm not talking about the needy. That's a first priority. If there's a Jew in need, that Jew should be taken care of first. But I do put the Jewish agenda, personally, before the human service agenda. When I say first, I mean the human service agenda is very big and very important and it gets a lot of dollars, and always has in this Federation. But that comes from my own background.

I am a rabbi; I believe in Jewish continuity and Jewish survival. You can't have Jewish survival just because you do nice things for Jews. Yes, you need the best Jewish Home for the Aged, but if that's all you have in your community, you have nothing. That doesn't inculcate. That is a value--taking care of the elderly--which is a very important Jewish value. You can't have a community this size live off of that. It's not either/or. When I came here, it was either/or. It was basically almost only human service, what you call social welfare. Today, in the funding, there is a balance of the two. That's really what's important.

XV CONFEDERATION

[Interview 6: May 21, 1991] ##

Need for Cooperating Federations

Glaser: Tell me about confederation.

Lurie: People, almost from the day I arrived here, were saying to me, "Can't there really be one Bay Area Federation and shouldn't you run it?" And I always said no. I just thought it was a mistake and plus I didn't want it. Let's deal with the mistake first.

The mistake is that we, being a West Bay Federation, the San Francisco Federation already was a huge geographical chunk. You had to drive for a couple of hours to cover our whole area. It was long and narrow. The idea that we would then incorporate several other huge chunks of real estate really meant that we would become too big to become an effective Federation. A Federation's role is to create and fructify Jewish community. Now, you can't have a sense of community if you have this land mass. Then you have a different kind of creature. The response is that you need some kind of close relationships, but then what you really want is a different form of relationship, and that idea is confederation.

So one day I wrote up a paper called "Confederation"¹ talking about the structure and the background. It was a way of creating governance structure for our three Bay Area Federations.

Glaser: Before confederation started, what did the Federation consist of? You talk about this long stretch of land.

¹See appendix.

Lurie: We go down to Los Altos Hills, and at that time we went to Marin-- just to northern Marin. But subsequently we have now added Sonoma to our Federation.

Anyhow, confederation was the way of dealing with the issue without incorporating any other Federation. We could relate; we could have joint activity; we could have joint planning in various areas; we could have certain fundraising events together and facilitate through the structure called a confederation. But each one of the three Federations would remain independent.

Glaser: And the three Federations?

Lurie: San Jose, East Bay--.

Glaser: And Sacramento?

Lurie: Well, actually, there were four. Sacramento was also in on it, so it was the Federations of Northern California. So Sacramento was included in confederation: San Jose, East Bay, Sacramento and San Francisco.

Glaser: What was the Koret Foundation role in this?

Lurie: That came later. By the way, what we won is a Schroder Award, which is the outstanding award for innovative ideas, and confederation won that award. I can't remember when it was, but it was a number of years ago.¹ It was a unique kind of structure for neighboring Federations. There is something very good about it. Even though I was the architect for it and I was the prime mover, the reason why it actually came to fruition was because of Mel Mogulof. Mogulof was at that time the East Bay Federation director. He endorsed it right away. Mel is a very fine conceptualizer. He really saw how this was significant for the East Bay, and because he accepted then the executive in San Jose had to accept it. If he would have rejected it, then the guy in San Jose would not want to accept it.

Glaser: Who was the San Jose Federation executive?

Lurie: I can't remember. The guy is, I think, now in Palm Springs. Not a remarkable individual and very concerned about his autonomous nature and how he would look in comparison with San Francisco, et cetera.

¹The Schroder Award was presented to the San Francisco-based Federation at the 1983 General Assembly in Atlanta. See appendix for description of confederation that was submitted to the Council of Jewish Federations in competition for its Shroder Award.

Role of Koret Foundation

Lurie: Anyhow, Mel was very much behind it. We had a retreat over in Oakland, where we codified it and it came to fruition. It had limited success. I can't say it was a big success. Now, what happened was confederation doesn't even function anymore. What's replaced it is Koret's relationship with the three Bay Area Federations. When Mogulof became the executive of the Koret Foundation, he broadened the Koret's mandate to include East Bay and San Jose. Up until then it was strictly West Bay Federation--our Federation. I mean all the people involved were all from here. But he came in and said, "Look, your foundation is so big and using this confederation concept let's include East Bay and San Jose."

Then, we began to have regular meetings under the prodding of Koret for joint funding, for joint projects, and so whatever we had done in confederation was upped considerably by the pressure of a major foundation saying do things together.

Glaser: Did Mel Mogulof get the position with the Koret Foundation because--?

Lurie: He was their first executive.

Glaser: Did he get that position because of his work with the confederation?

Lurie: No, he got it because he was one of two people I recommended for the job. When they interviewed him, he was the one who got it over the second person they interviewed. The second person they interviewed was Michael Papo. They were both the two sitting executives. By that time Michael, who had been my associate here, was the Federation executive in San Jose. So one was East Bay exec and one was San Jose exec. I said to the Koret board members that asked me, "These are two very logical people to have as your director." So they both were asked to interview and Mel was first chosen. They have different strengths; they are very different people. Interestingly enough now, Mel is no longer there, there have been several in between, and now they have chosen Mike Papo to be the executive.

Glaser: They seem to have a swinging door as far as their executives are concerned, a lot have gone in and out.

Lurie: It's a very difficult place to work, but Mike will do very well.

Effect of Confederation

Glaser: Was there any effect on fundraising by confederation or didn't it enter into the picture?

Lurie: What happened is we had joint affairs through major donors. Usually we would sponsor them and Oakland would participate, but we would have had them anyhow. It has created much closer cooperation. For instance, this Mega Mission was a natural by-product of that kind of cooperation. I would dare say that before confederation that probably would have never happened.

Glaser: Did the combining of the East Bay Observer with the Jewish Bulletin come together because of the confederation?

Lurie: In part. That was something that we pushed. I think we initially gave the Bulletin seed funding to pay for this, believe it or not, to encourage this kind of consolidation. Then the East Bay picked up the tab thereafter. It came out of the same place, if you will. We have much closer cooperation today, and the question still arises from time to time why don't you just merge; there is economy of scale and there's this and that. Well, there are certain areas where we could work more closely together. We probably could have one computer operation. Maybe something like that.

I still say the East Bay is a community unto itself. It's huge enough without getting involved with us. A quarter of a million Jews spread over this northern California's Bay Area, that's just a huge group to deal with.

Glaser: Is there any problem for the other Federations about San Francisco being so dominant?

Lurie: It's a problem. That's part of it as well. But on the other hand the relationship has been sort of a funny one. There was an article in the Bulletin where Mogulof, executive of the East Bay Federation at the time, is quoted as saying that I was like living next door to the 600-pound gorilla.

Glaser: Oh, I bet you loved that.

Lurie: It was a very flattering article, but it was cute. I will not forget the line Mel used [laughter]--like living next to a 600-pound gorilla. It's hard. I don't think I would find it very comfortable to be so close to a 600-pound gorilla. The East Bay campaign is around \$3 million and ours is \$18.5 million.

But we help. For instance, I will solicit the Koret Foundation for its gift for Exodus, and because of that, the East Bay goes way over its goal. Same thing with San Jose. It's not a bad deal.

Glaser: Are you saying that the Koret Foundation will follow your lead?

Lurie: I solicited the Koret Foundation for \$5 million for Exodus. Then they gave more and in turn divided up the over \$5 million according to a formula they created, which meant that we got \$3.7 million of it. The East Bay got \$700,000, which is so huge a gift when their total goal was only supposed to be around \$2 million. So, to get one gift of \$700,000, it obviously meant that you were going to raise more than what your goal was.

Glaser: Did this mean that they did not have to ask Koret? Koret did it automatically?

Lurie: Well, they didn't ask. Koret did it because I asked them and they were committed to Exodus. Now, we have joint solicitation, but since I'm the one that relates to the board of Koret, because they are all members of our Federation, I usually always take the lead in that process. It's a coattail effect, which is very nice for them.

Demographic Study, 1984

Glaser: Yes, indeed, very helpful. Tell me about the demographic study. This is actually the third in the history of the Federation.

Lurie: But the first that we did jointly.

Glaser: Yes.

Lurie: So, again, this was another joint activity. You can look at all these joint major cooperative ventures as an outgrowth of confederation and Koret wanting to jointly fund projects.

Glaser: How did this come about and how was it that Gary Tobin was chosen?

Lurie: I think we interviewed several and he just seemed to be the best available and he was hired. How did it come about? We hadn't had one for quite a while. We knew that we needed to take a hard look at ourselves, and it was a logical step.

Glaser: It was very costly. It was \$650,000, was it worth it?

Lurie: No, I don't think it was \$650,000. There were two stages of it. There was the demographic study which was \$250,000, I think. Then there was an implementation phase which cost over \$300,000. So if you roll the two figures together, that's where you get your \$650,000 number. There was a study and then there was a strategic planning process. Now there's an implementation process, which costs nothing except just the doing.

Glaser: Have changes in Bay Area demography changed the structure of the Federation and the services that it provides?

Lurie: Not dramatically. We basically had already moved in that direction. The major findings of the demographic study were known to us early. What are these? That we had a very dispersed population, that to reach the population you had to go out to where they were, deal with them in different areas. We had five offices. We were the most decentralized Federation in America for our size. At that point, we supposedly only had 80,000 Jews. We have five offices: Marin, Sonoma, San Francisco, North Peninsula, South Peninsula. The key finding was you can't serve all these Jews from one central area. Brilliant, right?

So we were out there. We had taken a position. We had decided a long time ago to spend a fortune on community development. We could raise the same amount of money and spend, I would say, almost half the dollars. But we made a commitment to do community development a long time ago. And that's a major piece of our Federation's budget. It's programs for Women's Division and young adults and couples and older Jews in the area. We have all kinds of programs that don't directly lead to fundraising. They enhance a sense of Jewish community. What the strategic planning process helped do was to focus on that which we already knew. We already knew that community development, that community involvement, was key and a central ingredient.

We got a statistic out of it, which is the intermarriage statistic, which just blew everybody's mind, at the rate of acceleration of intermarriage. Which just says again you've got to reach out to people. You've got to bring them in, otherwise you are going to have a declining Jewish population here.

I don't think any of the results--at least none of them surprise me. I was saying that we had a Jewish population of over 100,000 before the study. I said the Bay Area Jewish population is around 200,000. Frankly, if you were to eliminate the people living in households that are really not Jewish, the number comes closer to 200,000 than to a quarter of a million. I don't want to say I was a novē, I was not a prophet, but I virtually knew everything that was in that study that was perceived to be dramatic. Because I knew and because I said it didn't mean that

other people believed it. So this really helped people accept a lot of the things I had been saying.

Glaser: But did the study help you reach out to the unaffiliated Jew, the uninvolved Jew?

Lurie: Yes, but we've only begun that; we are not doing enough. It's an expensive proposition. Nancy Tamler, who is on the staff now, is solely to work in that area. I don't know what the East Bay has done. I know they are doing something somewhat similar. I really haven't talked to Ami about that. But they're definitely doing more outreach, as are we. And we are trying to get our agencies to look at it in a different way. We've reconfigured how we deal with our agencies as far as our budgeting process, et cetera. So there have been clear ramifications from the study that have been helpful to the Federation. I can't say yet they are profound, because the profound changes were made before.

Glaser: Such as what?

Lurie: Such as this radical decentralization. Such as having our decentralized offices. The South Peninsula has a six-person office. We could raise \$3 million with half the staff. So I'm saying they were already working in community development. The major issue of this demographic study is community development, community outreach. Since I said the nature of our Federation is already set up to do that from a staff point of view and from a lay point of view, it just reinforced what we already were doing.

Glaser: Were there any changes made? Was there any impact on the Federation agencies that came out of the study and the strategic planning process?

Lurie: You should talk to Tracy about that. I'm not really too au courant. I'm sure that there were certain changes made but they also began to do real decentralization. We urged them a long time ago to begin to decentralize. We pushed the Jewish Family and Children's Services to open an office in Sonoma. They have one in the South Peninsula and North Peninsula--they're decentralized. Most of our major service agencies have decentralized: our Center movement, our Family Service Agency, Federation. It's all part of the same dynamic.

Glaser: That sounds as if you're better able to deliver services.

Lurie: Absolutely. But it's a more costly way to raise dollars.

XVI JEWISH COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FUND

History of Fund's Growth

Glaser: I want to ask about the Endowment Fund. What was the role in the Council of Jewish Federations in establishing the Endowment Fund?

Lurie: Council of Federations had nothing to do with it, really. Let's come to the history of this place. When I came here the Endowment Fund was virtually without name. It was just a sum of money that the Federation had. Frankly, the lay leadership had very little interest in it. It was handled by a group of people in the finance and investment committee of the Federation; I think there were seven people on it.

Glaser: There was a finance and administrative committee.

Lurie: That might have been it, finance and administrative committee-- this is way back. This little committee oversaw the overhead of the Federation and all the personnel issues. The expenditure of the Endowment Fund, which was just, as I said, this pool of money of some \$6-7 million. Now, do you know what they did with it? Most of the income of that Endowment Fund that wasn't earmarked for certain projects (and I think the overhead of the Federation at that time was around \$700,000), they took \$350,000 from the Endowment Fund income and put it against the overhead of the Federation. That's the way the money was being spent. So I came in and I said, "This is crazy. You have a tremendous source of potential revenue and you're doing nothing with it. You're hiding it. It's like it's under this bushel basket. Let's free it up and create a lay endowment committee." I worked on that for several years and got nowhere. It was the most frustrating experience; they just didn't give a damn. "They" being the lay leadership.

Finally I decided there was a problem with me, that it had become so personal. I gave it to Norman Rosenblatt as a staff person, and he worked with the committee and they finally, out of

that process, created the endowment fund committee as a standing committee of the Federation.

Glaser: That was in 1976.

Lurie: Right. Now, that was done by Norman at my request. I can't remember who the lay leadership was, but I know that I couldn't do it. I spent a year of frustration talking to leadership, telling them, "This is so important. Look at Cleveland and how they've done it." And nothing. The Council of Jewish Federations wasn't into this thing in any big way at all then. So once we set up our own committee, we hired a staff person, Carole Breen.

Glaser: No, Marshall Kuhn came before Carole Breen.

Lurie: You're right, Marshall was first. You're correct. Move Marshall into that spot. He died of Lou Gehrig's disease. I think he had already been afflicted by then. And then Carole came in to work with him. Then after Carole--I don't know how many years, five or six years, then Phyllis [Cook] came.

Glaser: What skills does an executive director of the Endowment Fund need?

Lurie: Well, our endowment process has always been two-fold. One is the development of more funds for it, so the capacity to reach out and help develop the fund. And the other major piece of it was the allocation of those funds and working with lay people in that process. Phyllis has become very skillful at both. She's a very good endowment person.

Glaser: Have you worked with her in the development of funds?

Lurie: Many of the major funds are as a direct result of my involvement in development of one form or another. The largest single fund so far to date we've gotten is the Newhouse Fund.

Glaser: I wanted to ask you whether you had worked with Mr. Treguboff on bringing the Newhouse Fund into the Federation's Endowment Fund.

Lurie: Yes, I did work with Treg and yes, I pushed the fund here with all kinds of caveats. The lay leadership wanted to be tougher than I. I just said get it here. They were more concerned with detail than I. I said, "I don't give a damn. Give them the store. You're in the process of getting \$12-13 million." I mean it was bigger than our whole Endowment Fund, or as big almost. I said, "Get it here." There are certain people, even some that I just mentioned, that were really very finicky. They wanted the right deal. I said, "What do you mean 'right deal?' Get control of that fund." But Treg was the prime mover behind that as far as

bringing the Newhouse Fund here. Treg, and then I would say Bob Sinton played a major support role in that too.

Glaser: That's the fund that 50 percent goes to Stanford and to UC Berkeley?

Lurie: No, no. Far less. Not 50 percent. I can't remember what the percentage is but they have sum certain that they get every year.¹

Glaser: A sum certain? I've never heard that phrase.

Lurie: Well, a percentage of the amount. You'll have to look in the bylaws.

Distribution of Funds

Glaser: What is the major thrust of the Endowment Fund? I know some of it does come to the Federation.

Lurie: It is for emergencies and creative, innovative programs. That's the major thrust of it. Emergencies, if God forbid they happen, then we reach into the Endowment Fund for funding. For innovative and creative programs, it's a huge pool of start-up money. They can help all kinds of projects that maybe wouldn't find other funds.

Now, Koret has frankly become more important in this community for doing start-up things than we have. But on the other hand, Koret always looks to us and says, "Well, are you going to match us?" So, if we didn't have an Endowment Fund, we would have to create it just to deal with Koret's demands.

Eventually, Eleanor, the Endowment Fund will be really one of the key producers of money for feeding the total Jewish community. It's growing, growing and growing to such degree that it will become--. Right now it's a secondary factor, but it will become a very significant factor right along side the annual campaign of the Federation. Now, I project the growth of this thing to continue. It's now to roughly \$90 million. It will be \$130-\$150-\$200 million. It will be a significant partner in the annual campaign as far as providing funds for the Jewish community.

¹The two universities share 30 percent.

Glaser: How do you go about bringing people into this? Getting them to give their funds?

Lurie: You use all kinds of vehicles to do that. You use lawyers and professional CPAs and give them information, hold seminars for them. You have Phyllis' creative professional groups all over our Federation area working to let their clients know about the opportunities. We work directly with our major donors to let them know what they can do. We offer a philanthropic fund here which is a donor-advice fund. We have close to, I think, 300 such funds. People use them as sort of like a philanthropic bank. There is about \$22-23 million in these funds. It's an enormous business in itself. So, there is a lot of information going out about the Endowment Fund to publicize it. It's going to naturally grow. When you think about where it begin, as this hidden little nothing to now a very big, very significant undertaking. From no staff, to Phyllis and three staff members.

Future Possibilities

Lurie: What I want to do, and it's a plan that I've talked about that hasn't been implemented and I hope it will be after my departure, is to basically integrate the development of both the annual campaign and the Endowment Fund by utilizing staff and lay people from the annual campaign side. If you look at our staff configuration for resource development, because the Endowment is part of our resources, we have very few people doing Endowment development compared to annual campaign. Since Endowment is growing at a much more rapid pace as far as just sheer size--and frankly, it's going to grow even faster, I believe, in the future --we do not have enough developers involved in that area. Phyllis and I are the only two people that do endowment development professionally. We should have three or four people doing it in addition to ourselves. I suggest that the best other professionals from the annual campaign also be trained to be Endowment developers.

Glaser: Are you affected, both in the campaign and in your endowment development, by the fact that the really big givers either have died off or are getting older and older?

Lurie: No, it doesn't make any difference. We keep on raising more money. I remember when I came here people said that when Ben Swig and Walter Haas, Sr., and Dan Koshland would die the Federation would fold up. When the three of them died, and they all died in a very short period of one another in 1979, our campaign was somewhere around \$10 million. We have nowhere reached our

capacity. If you look at our giving, even though still we depend heavily upon our major donors, the percentage of what they contribute to our campaign is less than what it used to be.

When I came here, a handful of people contributed 42 percent. Today it's down to around 35 percent from that same smaller group of people. Though it's still substantial, it's diminished because we're getting more and more people giving more and more money. There are donors here that are giving \$350,000-\$400,000. Even the Koret gift itself, which is close to \$1 million, was virtually a non-gift when I came here. So you have huge new, either foundations or individuals, giving to Federations in this area.

XVII JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish Day Schools

Glaser: Let's talk about Jewish education. I know that is very important to you. In your curriculum vitae, you state that one of the things you did was to develop Jewish day schools. Can you spell that out for me?

Lurie: And informal Jewish education too. Remember, I was the father of the Confirmation in Israel program and also OTZMA; in this program we're now sending fourteen to fifteen kids a year from our Federation area to Israel for a year.

Glaser: That's the wholly subsidized college program?

Lurie: Right, right. Again, my belief was yes, you need a strong day school movement but you can't just depend upon that. An informal Jewish education attached to Israel is just terribly important. Our major donors here have basically not been in favor of the day school movement. Remember I brought this up before, about democracy, a kind of democracy that exists here. Even though our very largest donors have no commitment to day school education, parochial education, because there was a sense in the community that this was necessary they allowed it to happen. They gave more and more dollars to a process that they didn't believe in: day schools.

Glaser: Are you saying that the community was more ready for Jewish day schools than the leaders of the Federation?

Lurie: Than the major donors. Correct. That's absolutely true. Still is true to this day.

Federation Support

Glaser: Is there a conflict between the Federation financially supporting Jewish day schools and synagogues' religious schools?

Lurie: They are different programs. We support the religious schools in the synagogues too through the Bureau of Jewish Education. The Hebrew programs, the confirmation programs--we subsidize a variety of different educational programs, so I don't see it as a conflict at all. Most rabbis in this community would say day school education is very important. I can't imagine a rabbi not saying that.

Glaser: I didn't realize that you did support the synagogue programs. There was an article in the Spring 1991 issue of Reform Judaism, by Stephen M. Cohen, that states, "The Federation's increased interest in funds for Jewish education has come at the expense of human services, meaning less support for social workers, while the latter is of greater interest of Federation leaders who are Reform. Since it is the Orthodox and Conservative branches who are more interested in Jewish education, this makes Federation activities less attractive to Reform leaders." Do you agree with this?

Lurie: He's not talking about San Francisco, because 90 percent of our leadership is Reform. Yes, there are Conservative Jews that are very active in this Federation, and one was a president of this Federation--that's Jesse Feldman. But by and large they are all Reform Jews. All the other presidents were Reform Jews. The incumbent is from a Reform background. So it's not a statement of this community, clearly, because the Reform movement dominates the leadership of the Federation

Glaser: How does that compare to other communities?

Lurie: It's unusual. There's much more of a balance between Conservative and Reform. Orthodox leadership does appear in several Federations, primarily New York but other places as well, but there are many, many more Conservative Jews active. But it is much more balanced in most other communities. Here, the Reform movement dominates by sheer numbers.

Glaser: I wonder if that's a reflection on the fact that this community has always been much more accepting of Jewish people than many other communities.

Lurie: In general.

Glaser: This goes back to the Gold Rush days.

Lurie: I think people came here not to be Jewish; it was a way of starting over again. They escaped their roots here and they found quite a hospitable environment--very little anti-Semitism. It does exist here but much less so than other places. It probably does relate to it.

XVIII FEDERATION HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

The Need

Glaser: I want to ask you about this headquarters building. What made you feel that there was a need for a building?

Lurie: The Federation had a building before. It's a very interesting story. When I came here I said, "I don't understand. With the rates rising as they are in San Francisco, why haven't we bought a building to protect ourselves?" The answer was, "Well, we had a building but we sold it." There was a lovely building on California, almost right next door to Tadich's Restaurant. There was this wonderful brick building owned by the Federation. So then the question came out, "Well, how did it get sold?"

So I went very early on to the major leaders, I went to Ben Swig. I said, "Ben, why was the building sold?" He said, "Walter wanted it sold." Walter Haas. Then I went to Walter Haas and I said, "Walter, why was the Federation building sold?" He said, "Because Ben wanted to sell it." I said, "Oh." [laughter] So after doing a lot of investigative work, I found that Treg was the one that really wanted to sell it. His reasons are not terribly important for this, but he was the one who decided that it should be sold. Or he and some other leaders. But the two major leaders, Walter Haas and Ben Swig, were bamboozled. They always thought the other person was the one responsible for it, and they accepted that. They weren't fighting with it; they weren't angry about it. But that was the answer to my question.

Almost from the first day I got here I said, "We need a building." And then, frankly, other needs came first. For Federation to get its own building before we did a variety of other things that we did do subsequently, it would have been a mistake. I found a building on Sutter Street that we could have bought for \$500,000. I found a building on Bush Street where United Way is today that we could have bought for \$1 million. And

on and on and on. This building eventually cost us \$7 million, so you get a sense of different real estate prices.

One of my key people in the looking was Mel Swig. I was looking at a building on Market Street, and I sent Mel the plans. Mel said, "Look, I'm going down to Palm Springs. I'll show them to Walter Shorenstein. We'll get his reaction."

Acquiring Property and Raising Funds

Lurie: After that trip Mel calls up and he says, "Walter's got a piece of property for you." I said, "Really? Wonderful." He said, "Yes, call him up and go meet him." So that Monday I went right over to Walter's office. At the time we were renting on Sutter Street, 254 Sutter. I said, "What is it?" He said, "Well, look here, I'll show you." He went to his window and pointed out a parking lot you could see from his building, which is right at the base of California. "That's what I'm talking about." He said, "There are a couple of problems with it, but then it would be a perfect spot for your building." I figured why not.

I went and took a look at it; it seemed like a narrow piece of property, but I was told you could build seven stories; it would give us ample space. What were the problems? Well, there were two problems. One problem was that one of the partners who owned the land was not very fond of Walter Shorenstein, and he would hold up any disposition of the land because he owned one-seventh or one-sixth of it. So problem number one was getting him out of the deal. All the other partners were amenable because Walter really controlled them. The second problem, which was even more significant, was that there was a cloud over the property. The cloud was placed by the Muni [San Francisco Municipal Railway], which was, in its master plan, going to use this lot for a Muni turnaround. That cloud could not be cleared easily.

Glaser: But there were buildings all around it. How would they use it?

Lurie: But that was going to be the turnaround.

Glaser: They were going to clear the land?

Lurie: They were going to be able to turn it around and whip it out. Since this was the only spot where there wasn't a building, it seemed a logical place to do it.

Glaser: And still maintain the buildings that were around it on the corner?

Lurie: Yes. I guess Walter had tried to clear the cloud, but there were the two problems. We immediately went to Byron Meyer, and we bought his share out for, I think, \$200,000 or \$170,000. It was one-fifth of the ownership. Walter Shorenstein owned one-fifth, Bud and Leah Levitas owned one-fifth, Warren Epstein owned one-fifth, and a fellow from Milwaukee who was a relative of the Levitases owned one-fifth. So he owned a fifth of it, and we bought it.

We figured if the land costs us a million dollars it's cheap--not a bad price at all. Federation acquired the one-fifth interest, and then we negotiated for the rest of the land with Walter helping us. In several cases we had to pay the owners \$100,000, so it was sort of a half-gift. But Walter gave us his share outright. I really can't remember what the transaction was with the rest of them, but I don't think we had to pay any more than \$100,000 for anybody, except for Byron Meyer.

The cloud was a piece of cake for us because once we got title to the property, which we then did, we cleared the cloud in less than a month, which was unheard of. It blew everybody's mind in Milton Meyer, Walter Shorenstein's firm. Because it was for Federation, Richard Sklar got the thing removed almost overnight. Now we had an unclouded, totally owned by Federation piece of land, and Walter Shorenstein agreed to be the developer and oversee the project.

Now it just became an issue of raising the money for it, which was really quite easy. I had already gone to the three major families of those patriarchs that were the key donors to Federation, the key leaders. That's Walter Haas, Dan Koshland, and Ben Swig. If you come in the entrance, you'll see those are the three pictures on the wall in the marble relief there. The people underneath them are the people who contributed the money for the building. Of the \$7 million necessary for the building, \$4.7 million came from those three families.

Glaser: It sounds as if it was all really very easy and very painless.

Lurie: It was very easy and very painless. As I said, I solicited every other gift. The smallest gift was \$100,000, so anybody listed on there had to give at least \$100,000. The opportunity was not given to everybody; it was a small circle of people. The only gift that I did not get was the Herbst gift. That Mel Swig got, which was a quarter of a million dollars.

So it was an easy campaign. It had no ramifications on any other fundraising within the community, did not require any other lay participation, and the building is the result of that.

Glaser: Did you have any difficulty in filling the rest of the building with tenants of other Jewish organizations?

Lurie: Not really. First of all, we didn't even fill the whole building because we knew that we needed space for expansion. There was no problem. There are enough organizations that want to be involved here that we can, down the future, see the building will easily be filled.

Jewish Community Museum

Glaser: Tell me about the museum. Was this your project?

Lurie: In a sense I pulled a fast one. When I solicited the Koshlands, it came to \$700,000--\$300,000 from Sissy Geballe, \$300,000 from Phyllis Friedman, and \$100,000 from Dan Koshland, Jr. When I solicited the money from Sissy, who was along with her sister the prime mover in that family gift, I said, "Say that it's dependent upon the museum being named in honor of your father." So inherent in the understanding of the \$700,000 that came in, was as long as there was a museum in the building.

She wanted the museum, don't misunderstand me, and both Phyllis and Sissy wanted to have their father be honored in such a way. But I sort of put them up to it, as far as designating their money in such a fashion. They would have, I think, given it in an unrestricted way, much like everybody else gave in an unrestricted way. But it was a way of forcing the issue upon the community that we needed a museum. So I availed myself of that--a little subterfuge.

Glaser: Why did you feel the community needed a museum?

Lurie: Because you have a community of over 100,000 Jews, and there was no Jewish museum. There was one over in Berkeley, but that was sort of tucked away. And the San Francisco Jewish community was a big enough, historic enough, wealthy enough community to have a museum of its own. And it needed one because one of the things that is desperately lacking, and I think I mentioned it in other conversations, is that in many ways it is a very good and very dynamic Jewish community but it doesn't have much rootedness. It doesn't have a sense of Jewishness. You need to create that sense of Jewishness by all kinds of different pieces since it isn't organic to the place. A museum helps give us a sense of history, a sense of rootedness, a richness in our Jewish tapestry.

Day school education, attachment to Israel--all these things begin to build a group of people that have a sense of Jewishness greater than their parents or their grandparents. So I saw this as a vitally necessary institution lacking in the community.

Glaser: You had a lot of conversations with the board of the Judah Magnes Museum about combining the two museums, didn't you?

Lurie: That's correct.

Glaser: And that merger fell apart?

Lurie: They always came to nought. I don't want to say that anybody showed bad faith, but I think there probably was some bad faith in those discussions. The East Bay group was always more interested in getting the money from here and pretending like they were interested in a merger in order to advance their fundraising potential here. That's not recently; they now have substantial funds themselves and a substantial Endowment Fund, et cetera, but that's more recent in nature. Historically, Magnes courted the San Francisco Jewish community. Part of the courting ritual was "Maybe we'll combine." I don't think it was ever meant.

Glaser: I thought that the merger aspect was on your part rather than on theirs.

Lurie: No. Many, many years ago, Seymour Fromer recognized that if Magnes was going to ever become really something it had to be over here. That it would always be a wonderful gem in the East Bay, but somewhat sleepy. So he always had designs on a major exhibit presence over here, a major museum over here, to put Judah Magnes really on the map. And I think it was very sincere. But then there was a dynamic with his own lay leadership over there: what they would be prepared to give up there in order to fill this here, and the money necessary, and who would be calling the shots, and it became quite complicated.

Glaser: But they have the acquisitions and you have just shows and things on loan, isn't that true?

Lurie: There are acquisitions here too, but by and large what you said is correct. I always believed, forgetting about where the site should be, that there was tremendous capacity to merge these two entities because of their different strengths and, really, they would mutually support one another, and there would be tremendous economy of scales. Even when I opened up the museum here, I was still in favor of a joint governance structure and joint mission. Maybe one overall director of the museum, et cetera, et cetera. Unfortunately, that's just never happened.

Glaser: I've heard people talk about the Hagar statue downstairs as unfit for the Jewish Federation. How do you feel about that?

Lurie: Why?

Glaser: Because she's not a Jewish woman.

Lurie: Well, and she's holding Ishmael, who is not a Jewish person either. I can understand why people might say that. I think they are mistaken. Or, let's say they are limited in their outlook of what Judaism is all about. To me that represents the universal aspect of Judaism rather than the particular. If it would have been Sarah and Isaac, that would have been more the particular. But by showing that Abraham is the father of two nations, not one --Hagar is the mother and her son, Ishmael, is the founder of the Arab nation. Again, we have a common father. I am not talking about God; I am talking about Abraham.

I think this speaks to the universal nature of people and of the Jewish people. I think it is a very touching story, and we shouldn't be too particular. It's healthy for a federation to have that in its lobby. Very important.

XIX RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

AIPAC

Glaser: Both Tom Dine and Naomi Lauter give you public credit for suggesting that there be a regional office of AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] here in San Francisco, which turned out to be the first in the whole country. Tell me about that.

Lurie: That's pretty much it. I felt very strongly that AIPAC to serve its real mission needed to begin to operate regionally.

Glaser: What is your relationship to AIPAC?

Lurie: I support it. It's excellent organization. I knew its founder, Si Kenen, a wonderful guy, a journalist. I took a trip to Poland with him. Si Kenen was the founding executive. Terrific guy, wonderful man. Modest, lovely fellow. Anyhow, Tom Dine, who is the present director, is a dear friend of mine. Tom is as good or better than any other Jewish civil servant, Jewish national leader, professional leader. He's just a first-rate human being. And AIPAC's terribly important. Politics doesn't just repose in Washington, D.C. It reposes all over the country, so it affords them an outreach and an impact upon congressmen and senators they couldn't have any other way. This was just a model. I said to them they should have at least ten offices. I think they have five or six now.

Glaser: For a long time San Francisco was the only one.

Lurie: Well, I would meet regularly with his lay leadership to push for more. I was sort of the shill for that process.

Synagogues

Glaser: About synagogues in San Francisco, what is your relationship or the Federation's relationship to them?

Lurie: It's basically very cordial. In most rabbis' eyes and most synagogue leaders' eyes, there is a mutual support mechanism. The synagogue is the instrument for strengthening Jewish family; the Federation is the instrument for strengthening Jewish community. Now, if you don't have strong family, you can't have strong community. Jewish community helps reinforce family. We're in the same business, on different ends of it if you will. With a somewhat different mandate, but inextricably bound together.

The fact that I'm a rabbi, the fact that I relate to most of the rabbis in the area in a very unique way, the fact that when there is a board of rabbis' dinner, I am there. Often I have been the keynote speaker, but I'm the keynote speaker in a very intimate sense, where there is a close exchange. It's made a kind of relationship that you don't have in other federations, obviously, with their rabbis.

Glaser: In other communities there tends to be, or there can be, financial conflicts and competitiveness over financial matters.

Lurie: In this case, some of my best friends are rabbis.

Classes on Judaism

Glaser: You teach a class together with Robert Kirschner at Temple Emanu-El.

Lurie: Well, he's the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El. The class has not been at Emanu-El.

Glaser: No? Tell me about that.

Lurie: Well, the beginning of the class was I met Warren Hellman shortly after he came back to San Francisco. Warren is a very unusual man. One of his missing pieces is that he had absolutely not a clue about his own Jewishness. He had never had any Jewish education; he was never given any tools to understand his Jewishness. So I said to him when I first met him, "You know, you are a very intelligent man. Just talking to you I can see that. It just sort of confuses me how something that has lasted for forty, fifty generations, that has been passed on, you have

rejected without knowing. It's one thing to reject your Judaism out of knowledge. I don't really agree with that, but that's certainly a possibility. But you don't know anything about it, so you've rejected it out of ignorance." He said, "You know, you're right."

So Warren and I began to study the Bible together, and the first Bible class we had together was at the Pacific Union Club, which is not exactly hospitable to Jews, but that's part of his sense of humor. He's a member there, so he thought it would be a significant statement that we would have a Bible class there just for the two of us. Where the rabbi would teach the student, if you will.

Cissy Swig went on a mission to Poland and was really moved by it. So much so that she wanted to have intensive Jewish education. She helped foster the first group of CLAL [the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership] coming in here. It was sort of a two-fold thing. One, she had heard what I was doing with Warren; the other thing, her own experience in Poland and Eastern Europe. We began to have classes here, and very significant classes, with a lot of people involved, obviously.

Glaser: Here in the Federation building?

Lurie: And throughout the Federation area--Marin, the North Peninsula, South Peninsula, all over. Yitz' organization was the key element in those classes. An offshoot of that was Warren and his group. He didn't want to get involved in CLAL, but he would get involved if it was taught by me. Warren said to Phyllis Cook, when the key staff people were setting these CLAL classes up, "I don't want to do CLAL; I'll do it with Brian." I said to Phyllis, "Well, I don't want to just do it myself. I'll sort of team teach. Let's ask Bob Kirschner." So that's how that began.

Glaser: Who else was in that group?

Lurie: It was Warren's invitation list, so it's family and friends of his that are involved in it.

Glaser: How many were in it?

Lurie: About ten-twelve people, but it's a Bible class that is per capita the most significant Bible class probably in the world. It's an unusual group. They are lovely people; his family is the Haas family and the Koshland family and his friends are Gerson Bakar

and Dick Blum, so it's a group of mega-wealthy people. It's sort of an interesting Bible class from that vantage point.

Glaser: Has the Federation benefitted from that?

Lurie: These were all major Federation donors already.

Israel Consulate

Glaser: What is your relationship to the Israel Consulate here?

Lurie: It's gotten warmer and warmer. The last two consul generals were friends of mine. It's allowed for a much greater intimacy, not just on a personal level but between the Federation and these consul generals. Yaki [Yaakov] Sella was the first and Harry Kney-Tal now. They are wonderful, warm relationships. Zero tension, zero conflict, mutually supportive.

Glaser: You and Phyllis Cook are credited with helping to combat anti-Semitism on the campuses.

Lurie: Neither one of us deserves that at all, neither one. A program came in, I can't remember who initiated it, but Phyllis became a key person to help solicit foundations to pay for it. Actually, Bob Friend had more to do with it than either one of us initially. He sort of got Koret Foundation and the Osher Foundation to fund this outreach worker. This was based on a professional at AIPAC who was pushing for this. We just followed up on it, and Phyllis followed up more than I, but you can't give either one of us credit for that.

XX NATIONAL FEDERATION TRENDS

Local vs. Overseas Needs

Glaser: I want to talk to you about the federation movement in the United States. What is the current direction? We're talking now country-wide.

Lurie: It's going through a very difficult time because its resources are not keeping pace with the various demands--both local, national, and overseas. It is trying to figure out its own identity right now. I say its own identity; it has an identity. I've already suggested what its mission is, which is community building. But its strength is being tested right now.

In Israel they say, "You haven't raised anything near enough money to help the Soviet resettlement." Locally most agencies say to the federations, "You're not giving us enough money to do what we have to do here." These twin tensions are beginning to pull the federation, I don't want to say apart, but at least it's unraveling a lot of the edges of the federation, and the strength of the federation is somewhat being tested right now. I frankly don't see it that way. That's one version of it. There's truth in that, I'm not suggesting that there isn't.

Glaser: Yes, it's been going on for forty years.

Lurie: But now because of the Russians it's really going even further. The federation system, first of all, is an overused term. Meaning that when you say federation you think that they're all the same. The Federation in the East Bay is not the same as the Federation in San Francisco or in San Jose and clearly not the same as Los Angeles. Cleveland is different and Milwaukee--they are all different. They have the same mission, but the degree to effectuate and to carry out that mission is different based on resources, infrastructure, et cetera, et cetera.

The federation system still remains the central organizing factor for our local Jewish community no matter what. It might not be powerful, but it still is the major player. Take a place like Los Angeles. There are tremendous independent organizations down there that do huge fundraising events and have tremendous facilities and on and on and on. But the federation, as far as a single organization, is the largest single player down there of the total Jewish community. So it has a real role as far as where the community is going. It can't dictate, but it can help coordinate, modify, and direct.

Impact of Foundations

Lurie: That role, in my opinion, will grow even in Los Angeles, simply because of what I consider to be what's happening with mega-wealth. The Endowment Fund growth, coming back to that, is going to accelerate so greatly that a handful of gifts in every community will totally change the capacity of the federation to fund virtually anything. There are foreshadowings of this already, precursors of it. Koret here in San Francisco--Koret Foundation gives away more money to the Jewish community than does the East Bay Federation, by far. It's double. So when you have a funding source that gives twice the amount of money that the second largest federation in the area gives away, you've got to start looking at things somewhat differently. The major role of Federation was as a funding source for the local Jewish community. Koret is the second largest federation, in a way, in the Bay Area, not East Bay.

Now, Koret during his lifetime was not a generous man. To assume that there is only one Joseph Koret is a terrible mistake. I know right now there are maybe ten, fifteen, twenty others that could be on line, that could provide that kind of an income on an annual basis for the Jewish community. You know what? Not all ten, fifteen are going to come about, but two or three. All Oakland needs is one to more than double its fundraising capacity right now. San Francisco, obviously, would need several. Its fundraising capacity is much larger.

But San Francisco, probably in the next ten, fifteen years, is going to get three or four of these mega-foundations associated with the Federation. Koret is associated with the Federation, but I'm saying may be even more so--more directly, more personally tied in than even Koret is, and Koret is close. But it's still very much a private foundation.

This is happening all over. In Baltimore a guy by the name of Harry Weinberg left the federation a quarter of a billion dollars. Now Baltimore raises \$20 million a year, but a quarter of a billion dollars, the income on that is another \$20 million.

Glaser: And what's the impact of that?

Lurie: It's dramatic. It's changing. It's going to change the federations--how they organize themselves, what they can fund, what their outreach can be, et cetera, et cetera.

Glaser: So you're saying that programs of federation will expand?

Lurie: Will expand. Federations will become even more central once again in providing funds. We're just in a time warp right now where a number of federations don't sense this. Economically things are strained, but I'm saying it's changing. If you and I were sitting fifteen years from now, basically the federation movement will be even more powerful than it is today, than it was yesterday.

Glaser: Will the Federations that have that much wealth help the smaller communities?

Lurie: Well, they should.

Glaser: I'm not talking about East Bay. I'm talking about, for instance, New Mexico or Arizona.

Lurie: If this UJA thing comes about, I'm going to suggest on the national scene that these mega-fortunes should be greater than just their communities; they should relate to more than just their communities. There is a national responsibility; there is an international responsibility. When you start getting sums of this magnitude, they should be relating to the national Jewish organizations. For fifty, seventy-five, one hundred major foundations of this ilk with a quarter of a billion dollars, one hundred million dollars, et cetera, there should be some real national connections. So that New Mexico, Arizona, wherever, can benefit. Not just these, if you will, traditional Jewish communities.

Glaser: Will the federations in the wealthy communities be willing to do that? To share the wealth?

Lurie: I would hope they would, but I think one of the ways is to begin to work on it. In other words, I would propose going to the Baltimore Federation and saying, "We need some kind of a relationship with you. Some kind of a mechanism where we tap into this largesse for national projects. Now, will they definitely

do this? I don't know. I think they will. I think any place that comes up with that kind of money that doesn't do it is making a mistake.

Glaser: It will be interesting to see what's going on in five to ten years from now.

Lurie: It always is interesting.

Glaser: And quite an impact on Israel as well as the smaller communities in this country.

Lurie: Absolutely.

Dissatisfaction Among Communal Professionals

Glaser: There has been a series of articles in the Jewish Bulletin concerning dissatisfaction on the part of federation professionals.

Lurie: It wasn't our Federation professionals. I doubt if we had one person in that series of articles. It was other Jewish communal professionals.

Glaser: Right.

Lurie: They are underpaid. They really don't have, I would say, by and large most of them, a living wage for the Bay Area. And for that matter, probably in a lot of other communities. It is a problem.

Glaser: Is it a matter of lacking respect also?

Lurie: I don't know. Quite often your dignity is tied to your economic freedom, and if you feel that you just can't make ends meet you don't feel the dignity of it. Your home life suffers; it's the major cause for divorce--economic problems. It relates to self-esteem, et cetera, et cetera. So it's complicated. With lay people, is there a problem as far as dignity? No.

Glaser: That was expressed in one of the articles.

Lurie: Yes. In the Federation, I don't think that's an issue. I'm not even sure it's an issue in places like--. In the Family Service Agency, there are therapists dealing with clients, so that won't be an issue. In the Jewish Home, I don't know. The dignity issue to me is not, as far as lay person to professional, the primary problem. It might be a secondary, tertiary problem.

Glaser: There certainly were a lot of responses to that initial article about it, so evidently there were some buttons pushed. There were a lot of people that feel that way.

Lurie: But again, I think the way they feel concerning a lack of respect is because of how poorly they are being paid. It isn't that somebody has shown disrespect to them or somebody is saying, "You're just a Center worker" or "You're just a social worker" or "You're just a federation worker." It's that you're making \$20,000 a year, living in one of the most expensive areas in the United States.

Glaser: That's certainly true.

Lurie: So I think it largely comes back to an economic problem.

Fundraising and Community Needs

Glaser: Do the federation campaigns need improving? Are they effective?

Lurie: I think most federation campaigns need improving, including this one. Absolutely. There are great degrees of expertise in various federations. Some markets are much easier to plum than others. This is a more difficult one than most communities because of how assimilated it is, how spread out the Jewish population is. To raise money in Cleveland for the Jews is much easier, even though it isn't as wealthy a community as San Francisco is. It's just much more a part of their mother's milk, if you will. That's their tradition.

So yes, the federations across the country, even the good ones, could even get better. Take one of the things I said, major donors. Jewish giving has not kept pace with Jewish wealth. In 1967 or in 1973, a \$1 million gift was enormous. Today it doesn't represent anything of an individual's giving capacity. Today a \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25, \$50 million gift is indicative of a giving capacity. We're getting \$1 million gifts as benchmark gifts. That is not healthy for the federation system. We have to up the amount to be commensurate with the need and commensurate with the ability of those donors that are committed to the Jewish community, if they are not giving anywhere near to the level they could be giving. That's all over the country, every community, from the best communities to the not good communities.

Glaser: You speak of the need. Aside from Israel, is there is an expanded need within the Jewish communities?

Lurie: Absolutely. There is a tremendous growth of Jewish infrastructure all over the country. The capital needs in this community alone are so enormous. We have \$100 million worth of needs right now, capital needs, in this community, just our Federation--minimum, over the next ten years.

Glaser: I know it's a myth that there are no poor Jews, but they don't have the same needs that they did years back. So that's what I'm really asking, not about infrastructure but the social service needs.

Lurie: Well, again, it comes back to an earlier question about social services verses Jewish education. A Jewish community's health is not just based on whether there are economically needy Jews or not. What it's based on is how Jewish are they? How committed to the community? How committed to Jewish values and Jewish culture and Jewish history and Jewish identity--Jewish peoplehood. To do all those things, you need a broadening of Jewish infrastructure all over the country. That is not necessarily Jewish hospitals.

Glaser: You're speaking of Jewish outreach, then.

Lurie: That and then also there are Jewish families that are undergoing tremendous pain and erosion, as far as strong support for our Jewish systems, for our families, period. The Jewish Family and Children's Service, along with everyone, would say there is a crisis going on--marriages, divorces, what happens in single-parent families, et cetera. So you know what? There is a lot more money needed for all kinds of Jewish activity and Jewish needs that don't relate to poor Jews.

My voice is definitely going.

XXI POSITIONS ON NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

[Interview 7: May 29, 1991] ##

Importance of Action Rather than Studies

Glaser: Before we talk about your relationship to Israel, I want to ask you about responsibilities you've had with national organizations: the Council of Jewish Federations and United Jewish Appeal, and perhaps others.

Lurie: Well, the others aren't meaningful, really. I've dabbled a bit with Hebrew Union College, but it's really dabbling. For a short period I entertained being the chief executive officer of the American Jewish Committee, but that was something in passing. The only two that I can say that I've really involved myself with are the United Jewish Appeal and the Council of Jewish Federations. There have been really different ways that I have related to those two organizations. At certain moments of time I'm sure they've seen me as a major troublemaker, the enfant terrible. Those were the days where they perceived me as trying to attack, fight, and undermine.

Glaser: That isn't what I meant, Brian. I meant actual committees you've served on.

Lurie: Oh, you wanted positions.

Glaser: Right. Committee assignments. In 1980, you were chairman of the subcommittee for the National UJA Project Renewal Committee.

Lurie: Eleanor, I don't remember. I don't even think about those kind of things. They don't really mean much. I was the chairman of this; I was on the committee of that. I was on the long-range planning committee of UJA. There are so many different things like that that are frankly not important.

Glaser: One that sounded very important to me was that you participated in the UJA's first long-range self-study.

Lurie: That's true, and I'm telling you it wasn't important. These studies all sound important. Most of them are meaningless, at least the ones I participate in. Could they have meaning? I don't know. My vantage point is that it's the doing; it's not the studying; it's not making the recommendations for direction. It's actually making things happen. In all these committees, very little ever happens out of these committees.

Glaser: Just your saying so is important.

Lurie: Just my saying what?

Glaser: That this was not important. That it wasn't the study, it was the doing. You bring your own perception to what somebody else might think important.

Lurie: It's true. It's not maybe a conventional way of looking at all these different things. I know that people in their biographical sketches or curriculum vitae list these things ad nauseam. I don't think they mean anything. It's sort of like being on a corporate board. So what? What does it really say if you are on the board of AT&T and IBM. What it means is that you've gained acceptance with a certain group. That's what it means. Either you went to the right colleges or you got involved in a business and you stayed in that business. It doesn't really say anything more. It's not a badge of honor.

Now, if you revolutionize the car business, or if you make IBM into the giant that it has become, that's different. That to me is regard. To sit on committees and to be on board, it's what you have done with that position. I can honestly tell you that I can't think of a time where I sat on a committee and I made any difference at all. Sure, my inputs were maybe interesting and scintillating in certain ways, but what does it really mean? Maybe somebody else thinks it means much more and they're right. I just don't have much patience for it unless we go to things like we've done here: the strategic planning and demographic study and all that. Then what? What have you done to change the Jewish community. You've studied it, so big deal. It's given you information to act. It's the acting. Now, there are reams of information to act even without those studies. Most people choose not to act. They would rather study.

Glaser: Well, actions did come out of the committees that you've served on.

Lurie: Nothing significant.

Glaser: Oh! [disbelief]

Example of United Jewish Appeal Self-Study

Lurie: You know what happened at the UJA? The UJA did the self-study, it's a wonderful example. This is interesting. Herb Solomon was the chairman of the committee. A brilliant San Diego lawyer, a wonderful guy. I'm very fond of him. An entrepreneurial type guy, a wonderful chairman, thorough, thoughtful. He put together a stellar committee of some academics, a rabbi here or there, another Federation executive, and myself. Irving Bernstein was on it, the past executive of UJA. It was an interesting mix. I said to my friend Herb Solomon, "I want you to include another guy on the committee." "Oh, who's that?" "His name is Stanley Horowitz." "Oh, I don't want to include him." Nobody else wanted to include him either, but I insisted and he got included.

Now, Stanley Horowitz was a pain in the neck on that committee. He was antagonistic, he was negative, difficult. I can't say that I was sorry that I put him on, because he had a point of view and I thought it should be expressed.

Glaser: What was his position at that point?

Lurie: He was the executive of Cleveland Federation. So we come up with all this far-ranging stuff as far as the way the UJA should relate to UIA [United Israel Appeal] and JDC [the Joint Distribution Committee], and to its regions and its leadership and its training for new professionals in the field, et cetera. Several years later they hire Stanley Horowitz as executive of UJA, the guy they didn't want on the committee, the guy who was totally negative on the committee. For seven years he's the chief executive officer of UJA. Stanley is very bright, very well organized, but the UJA in any honest description of it is a shadow of its former self as far as implementing national and international plans and designs, as far as its energy, as far as its vision, as far as its presence.

I'm not blaming Stanley Horowitz. All I'm saying is we did this wonderful study. Stanley becomes the exec., the lay leadership is in place, and what happens? Instead of having this new future, you end up with something that I don't think anybody is particularly happy about, including Stanley Horowitz. He's not unhappy about what he did. He did some good things that happened during his tenure, I'm not suggesting otherwise. But so what? So there was a study. It's the people that are the doers. It's the people, those few people, that really make a difference. All the rest of it is window dressing.

Glaser: Are you saying it's window dressing for a certain group of people?

Lurie: I say in reality. When you measure human endeavor and human life and human doing, it's the right person at the right time at the right place. You can have a wonderful study and if the right person comes in to implement that study, that's fabulous. If the wrong person comes in to implement the study, for whatever reason the study is meaningless.

More on Demographic Study

Glaser: You weren't opposed to Gary Tobin's demographic study, were you?

Lurie: Honestly? I told you in another interview I felt that we knew most of the facts already. We spent a lot of money for that--we spent over \$600,000. You asked if there was criticism. Yes, there was criticism. We basically knew what that study was going to tell us. Has it led to profound changes in this organization? No.

Glaser: Studies in the past indicated that there were more Jews in the Bay Area than had been supposed, and that made a difference as far as providing services.

Lurie: What difference does it make unless you're going to do something about it? So what if you know they're here? If you don't build, if you don't create new Jewish infrastructure, if you don't expand your horizon, does it make any difference? Are you raising a lot more money in the East Bay right now?

Glaser: But the latest demographic study showed that you had to provide more services. Wasn't that result enough?

Lurie: It does, but what's happening? We knew that without the study. We knew we were providing far too few services. If you talk about senior citizens, I think St. Louis has 6,000 units for their Jewish senior citizens, with a Jewish population of 60,000, and we've got nothing! It's some incredible number. I may be overstating it, but we know that our Jewish infrastructure, for the size of our Jewish population was inadequate. Even if our Jewish community was only 110,000, instead of 220,000, we knew it was wholly inadequate. What difference does it make that we knew we were double. Let's just do it. I'm going to sound like I'm anti-studies.

Glaser: Yes, you do. [laughter]

Lurie: I guess what I'm really nervous about is how much time is spent on them and how little output comes. That's always bothered me. I

am much more of the Na'aseh V'nishma, which is this biblical injunction that says, "Do and then you will hear." It is the emphasis on action and the hearing or the learning follows that. If you wait so long and you learn and you think and you study--.

Glaser: What you're saying is it becomes an end in itself.

Lurie: Exactly.

Glaser: Well, let's go on to your rabble-rousing in relationship to Israel.

XXII SAN FRANCISCO FEDERATION VS. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Reorganization of the United Jewish Appeal

Lurie: Here is an issue of a community making a difference as far as the life of the UJA or the CJF. There was a difference. In a unique moment in time, the UJA and the CJF printed a new piece of stationery to have one letterhead. It was the only time in their history to date. With this CJF/UJA logo they sanctioned our Federation officially.

Glaser: How did they do that with the stationery?

Lurie: It was a letter to us saying that "We hereby condemn your giving \$100,000 outside the normal process to overseas concerns."

Glaser: Let me see if I understand this. They printed up a joint statement?

Lurie: On a special piece of UJA-CJF stationery, signed by the leadership of the joint organizations. [laughter] It's humorous. It is. You're laughing. It's at once laughable and lamentable that the only thing that could get these organizations to put themselves together was this little action by San Francisco Federation.

What can a local Jewish community do for national, international affairs? Historically, local communities do very little on the national level. What they do is they provide leadership who then lead on the national, international level. Ergo, federations such as Cleveland and Detroit and Baltimore and Chicago have provided an extraordinarily large number of leadership for those international-type positions in the last twenty-five, thirty years of our Jewish community's life.

I think with San Francisco you have the first time that a local federation becomes an international and national player as a federation. We ceased being just a local federation. That in

itself was an incredible accomplishment. The reason it was structured to do that was because we were trying to change a whole system, and the only way you could take on a system was by becoming a player in the larger arena.

Glaser: You say we but this was really you.

Lurie: I led it, but I could not have done it unless this is what we all agreed on.

Glaser: But what gave you the impetus or the idea to do this? From the 1978 Federation minutes I learned that the executive committee recommended a major reorganization of the governance of the United Jewish Appeal, and the reorganized board should have significant Federation representation. Later you announced that UJA governance would include federation representation, and Cleveland had followed San Francisco's initial action.

Lurie: 1978? I've been saying it for as long as I've been around, but that was not the date.

Glaser: It sounds too early?

Lurie: I know it's too early.

Project Renewal

Lurie: I'll take you through the chronology of it because it goes back before we started staking out this maverick national, international position. We did approach it in a different way at first, and let me go through the different way.

It really begins in 1978-79. Up until then I primarily concerned myself with fundraising and certain structural changes here at the Federation, such as the Endowment Fund, et cetera, changing it and making it into a very important entity. But starting in '78-79, both I and this Federation took on national and international leadership in a much more conventional way. Not by becoming international but by beginning to lead a system in the following way. Our community, through my prodding, became about the first to pick up on Project Renewal. We were the first community to hire our own communicator. We hired a fellow by the name of Zvi Sobel, who is still a professor at Haifa University in the Department of Sociology. He is an old friend of mine. I met him when I was a student in Israel in 1966. He had just come over from Brandeis, where he was a professor.

In 1978, when we decided to have this twinning relationship, I pushed this with Irving Bernstein. Irving Bernstein, who was then the head of UJA, has credited me publicly with giving him the push to push UJA into adopting Project Renewal. What I said to Irving was, "We have plateaued in fundraising, and this will allow us to get off the plateau." That was true. But for me the reason for Project Renewal was twinning, twinning on a profound level. In fact, I'm giving a speech tonight so I've thought about it.

Israel has gone through basically three eras since it was created in 1948. The first is what I would call the heroic phase; the second is the post-heroic, and now we're into the heroic/post-heroic or post-heroic/heroic, either way--the third phase. First phase: Israelis as founders, as pioneers, Land of Milk and Honey, kibbutzniks, Horah, great winners of wars in '48, '56. Then in '67, the lightning Six Day War, the pride, Moshe Dayan. We would not trade him for the entire Pentagon staff, et cetera. The Pentagon was willing to make the trade because they were losing Vietnam and Israel was winning the Six Day War. On and on and on.

Then there was something clearly wrong. It was a real society and had its warts, and the warts began to show as Israel was a victor, not victim. And the whole dynamic of "How does a Jew suppress another person"--the Arab, that is. It began to seep out between '67 and '73 in a variety of ways. There began to be a real slide, and the slide finally led to the '73 Yom Kippur War. Over 3,000 lives were lost and Israel was almost destroyed. It was vulnerable, its leadership was vulnerable.

Golda Meir was almost in disgrace because of this war. The Labor Party was eventually pushed out, directly as a result of this war and their arrogance in power. There was tremendous graft at that time. One major Labor official after another was being indicted. And then you get to Begin and there was a whole disenchantment.

Now, we are into the post-heroic period, which continued, I would say, all the way up until 1990, where you had just a series of problems emanating out of Israel. Yes, there would be a moment in '85, the airlift of Ethiopian Jewry. There would be these little pieces where you would feel good, but basically, it was tough. It was hard. It was hard being an Israeli and they had to struggle and they were against great odds. They didn't look always wonderful and the press was giving them a beating and we were apologizing and our young didn't like it as much. There was no memory of the Holocaust--on and on and on.

Now we are into this new era. I don't want to get off into the new era. You have to come down to the South Peninsula and

hear my speech on that one. But I want to stick with what I would call the post-heroic era. You are now into a demythologizing process. The myth of Israel as this heroic country was being undermined. It had to be replaced by the reality. This is a real Israel. It's a real state with real problems, and people are real people going through the same kind of problems we went through--even worse, living in that crucible. So you had to connect people with people. Project Renewal philosophically was a breakthrough because it allowed people to connect with people. Ergo, you might have differences; you might be upset with the government of Israel; you might be upset with policies or directions; but if you are tied to the people of Israel that will sustain you. That's why I believed in Project Renewal, because I saw it as an opportunity for a community--San Francisco, Johannesburg, Philadelphia, Montreal, Ottawa, I don't care where--to tie themselves to a place in Israel. To people, real people, in Israel; not to an idea, but to people. In the post-heroic era you needed to be tied to people. It was going to sustain you and I believed it would sustain you.

Our Federation played this kind of cutting-edge role in leading us in this new era and pushing the establishment, namely UJA, in adopting Renewal, in fostering and fructifying Renewal. It became something very significant, much more significant than frankly the dollars ever became. It was a new relationship. It was something that emboldened, if you will, people in Israel to really seek their own rights and their own abilities through a process they never had before, which was the municipal process. Everything else before was on the national basis.

We empowered people in Israel; we empowered our relationship. As a consequence, we were tied to Israel in a new way. Renewal played a key role in that. Renewal began to--I don't want to say wind down. Our community went to another Project Renewal community in '82, Kiryat Shmona, very significant. We did some very interesting projects.

But I began to see the need in this post-heroic age to become even greater. Therefore, we needed to tie ourselves with peers in Israel. It wasn't enough just to do with people in a given town who weren't necessarily our peers. And so the Amuta, a not-for-profit association in Israel. Israelis from all walks of life, but walks of life where they were key educators, business people, professionals, newspaper people, et cetera. These people would relate to people who are of like kind back here in San Francisco. We began to try to create lines of communications and relationships between those groups starting in 1986.

That's all part of the fostering and the strengthening of relationship to deal in a post-heroic Israeli age. Is that clear?

Glaser: Yes.

Challenging the System

Lurie: Something else happened, though. In 1983 I took a sabbatical. We didn't have sabbaticals then, but I took one anyhow. I went away for three months. My first six weeks were in Israel, and the next six weeks I traveled around the world with my new wife, Caroline. It was our honeymoon. In Israel that summer, I came to a conclusion that our Federation was on the verge of what a paper entitled "The Crossroads to Responsibility."¹ That paper was a turning point in how we would effectuate and play out our role as national leaders and become what I would call a national and international federation. Because what that paper did is it basically challenged the system. It was our Federation against the system. The system was the UJA, it was the CJP, it was the Jewish Agency, it was United Israel Appeal. It was the whole works.

What the paper basically said is that just like we have a tremendous responsibility to follow our local dollars as a federation, we have an equal responsibility to follow overseas dollars. And we have not done that. Our present structure does not allow us to follow the dollars. As a consequence, the system is not accountable, dollars are being lost in the system. It is not streamlined as it should be. It's politicized. There is ample evidence of that through the World Zionist Organization and the political parties of Israel and how they then relate to the Jewish Agency. There is an over-loaded bureaucracy within the Agency itself that has to be streamlined.

You can question whole fields of service, but we left that alone. These were general concerns that we had about following the dollar and our responsibility to our donors. We said that our national organizations were not doing their job in that area.

What happened was we went over to Israel after this paper was written. It was a group of our past Federation presidents, including people like Jesse Feldman and Frannie Green and Bob Sinton and Richard Goldman. There was a number of other major Federation leaders, but Ron Kaufman was not in that.

We went in the spring of '84. We went on a mission where we studied the Jewish Agency. It was the first mission of its kind that went for an in-depth study of what the Jewish Agency was doing. We came back and we verified all the things that this

¹See appendix.

paper said: the problem of bureaucracy, the problem of not streamlining the system, the problem of accountability, et cetera, et cetera. There were three recommendations in our paper. Recommendation number one is that we should establish our own office in Jerusalem. We should have a meeting with the national and international leadership to tell them of our concerns and ask them to take action on them. And depending on how those conversations go, we should consider giving up to 5 percent of our overseas dollars, which at the time were roughly \$350,000, and we should allocate it separately.

That passed our board of directors and I believe it was communicated in June, when the proverbial shit hit the fan. A summit meeting was called by the leadership of all of our various national and international organizations in August of 1984, here in San Francisco. Representing the Jewish Agency was the chairman, Chuck Hoffberger, and the founding chairman, Max Fisher, the head of CJF, Marty Citron. Irwin Field, I believe, at the time representing United Israel Appeal as the president. I believe Bob Loup, representing UJA. Ray Epstein, an architect from Chicago. There was only one professional there. He's now a key staff person of the Jewish Agency, Howard Weisband.

None of the other professionals showed up. It was strictly a lay group. They came out here and they basically sat down in the room with thirty of our top leadership. It was an incredible meeting. I'm sorry we didn't tape it. We were told that we were terrible, that we were making a terrible mistake and how dare we.

Glaser: You had some pretty big guns against you.

Lurie: We also had our big guns in the room too. We had a stellar cast from here too. We had Richard Goldman, Mel Swig, Peter Haas, Ron Kaufman, etc. But it was big. We had a big contingent. There were twenty, twenty-five people in the room from our side and they were eight or nine--however many there were.

Actually, the most significant statement made that day was by Sora Lei Newman. Chuck Hoffberger said something about how it's difficult to be national leaders and she turned around and said, "You know, it's difficult to be a local leader. You watch all these different things happen and you seem to have no control over them. Mr. Hoffberger, we have to go out and raise the money and we don't have the answers to the questions. We've presented these questions before you today."

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Lurie: There was an interesting opening gambit that we ran. We had the opening statement. We prepared a slide show that was narrated by

Mel Swig. It basically said that the reason why we are doing what we are doing is the system. This was true. The decision to take on the system was because the system was unhealthy. We weren't raising the kind of money we needed to raise. The system itself had grown lax and it was time for a change. There was nothing coming from the national and international leadership that really responded to the needs.

Local Federation campaigns not only had plateaued, they were going south. We made a presentation showing what kind of money is now allocated overseas. What it was historically, what it is now. It showed that in terms of constant dollars, in other words against inflation, we were raising far less money and seeing far less money than we were years before. That we just weren't doing anywhere near the job.

It was a presentation that there was no arguing with. It's clear that the system needed tremendous overhauling and that we were failing in our fundraising responsibility. That's why we were joining the issue right then. At the conclusion, Mel Swig got up and announced that his family was going to give a million dollars and challenged the other major donors in the room to do likewise, because none of them were. Neither Max Fisher nor Chuck Hoffberger's family at the time were giving a million dollars. They were really shocked. I think the person who opened the conversation was Bob Loup to thank our people.

The action by our leaders said, "We're making a commitment to the system in spite of all of the things we're saying, and we would expect other people in the room to follow." Ron Kaufman announced during the course of the meeting that his gift was going from \$60,000 to \$100,000. We put them on the spot. There was a lot of rhetoric but there wasn't much action from a fundraising point of view because their own gifts were flat. They were the key leaders of the world Jewish community, and they were leading a system nowhere. That was the confrontation.

They said, "We'll try to make changes." We said, "All right, we'll give you time. We're going to open up the office in Jerusalem." "That's fine." Ray Epstein, the fellow from Chicago, is a very thoughtful guy and he was trying to make peace in this process. He was the head of the allocations committee of the Jewish Agency and a very close friend of Chuck Hoffberger. He was trying to be, and he in fact was, sort of the bridge between that group and ourselves.

What happened is that we decided not to move on the 5 percent issue, this was in August of '84, that we would let them go through their attempts at change. There is much more to this

whole historical piece. When we get to the end of it, I'll make the statement.

Glaser: Okay.

Lurie: I will not speak about this publicly; it doesn't serve any purpose. But for history purposes it's important.

We did nothing more. In truth, the UJA did try to mount an effort under the direction of Stanley Horowitz. He did some good things and he tried to do some very good things. He established a committee called scope and function, which was an attempt to try to streamline and also to make more accountable the system. The basic idea was that the federations would be accountable to the UJA and, in turn, the UJA would have an accountability back to the federations.

Glaser: Is this different from the Creative and Innovative Fund?

Lurie: That's much later. Starting in the fall of '84, the UJA ran a scope and function committee, of which I was appointed a committee member, along with Richard Goldman. There was an attempt to change, but it was absolutely throttled by representatives of CJF who were afraid of it and by other people who went along with the CJF. It was really a fight over turf, as they perceived it.

So nothing happened, we just ran through the rest of '84 and into '85. In September of '86, we decided to do something independent. The independent move was to allocate \$100,000 outside the system. I was in Israel when I announced it. We did it after the UJA process had failed and nothing else was happening. In other words, when it was clear that the national effort had been terminated, we said, "All right, now we have to act." We had already had our office set up, and it had been functioning for a year and a half. We did the separate allocation, and we also had the Amuta, which would be the group that would allocate the money with us. The truth of the matter is I can't remember what I set up first: the Amuta or the \$100,000.¹

Anyhow, that caused the most significant trauma to the body politic of our American and international Jewish community of anything I have witnessed in my entire tenure in the field. It was as if we shot the president. It was incredible what that \$100,000 did. It caused chaos. It was written up every place. We became, depending on where you were coming from, either the bad guys or the good guys because what we said about the money.

¹The Amuta was formed in 1984, and the \$100,000 was allocated to be dispersed by the Federation's Jerusalem office in 1986.

The issue was two-fold. One is we wanted to spend money in areas that the Jewish Agency hadn't gone. It was a substantive issue as well. It was also an issue of change. We said, "Look, guys, we're giving you a warning. You didn't listen to us the first time in '84. You piddled away a year and a half. You made very few changes to the enterprise. Now we're going to start taking you on. We have our office in Jerusalem. We have the Amuta, which is going to allocate the money, and we're going to create our own system. This little San Francisco Federation is now going against a Goliath."

All our lay leadership during this time took terrific beatings if they ever ventured out of San Francisco. They were just beaten up by the national Machers [big wheels; important people]. "How dare you. You are destroying. You are counter-productive. Who do you think you are? Your executive is a little Napoleon or a fool. Fire him!" Billy Lowenberg, president of the Federation, was given instructions by several international Jewish leaders that he had to fire me at once because of what I was doing. Chuck Hoffberger called me summarily into his suite. This was in 1983 at the G.A. in Atlanta.

Glaser: Is he the man who owns the Baltimore baseball team?

Lurie: He did. They've sold it since. He said to me, "You peed on me once, you peed on me twice, you'll never pee on me again." [laughter] Meanwhile, he was standing in his boxer shorts, uttering this statement to me. Hoffberger had read the riot act to Billy Lowenberg. This was the guy who was the head of the Jewish Agency at the time.

Glaser: But Mr. Lowenberg was opposed to a lot of the action you took in this matter.

Lurie: He was totally opposed. He was the only one who was opposed to it, because he was on the board of governors. They kept on looking at him like--"Lowenberg, what's wrong with you? What's wrong with your community."

There are different kinds of people in the world. There are those people who would rise to the occasion and say, "I'm very proud of my community; it's trying to change you sons-of-bitches. Billy is not that kind of person, and he was terribly embarrassed. It was very hard for Billy. It was an impossible position that he was in--poor Billy Lowenberg. It's regrettable, but one of those things. Anyhow, he has the honor of being the first member of the San Francisco Jewish community on the board of governors, for whatever that's worth. Our troublemaking and our strong voice of change got him there to begin with, but then to carry it through was a different matter.

But what this did was not only shake them up, but it make them take a look at themselves and what they had done. You begin to see--and this includes during Hoffberger's leadership, not just Mendel Kaplan--a kind of much stronger Diaspora input, much more control going to the Diaspora. Much more serious involvement by the Diaspora in what was happening with the Jewish Agency. We created the first overseas committee here, as I said, in the fall of '83. It was formed by this "Crossroads for Responsibility." The first charge they had was to go to investigate to learn about the Jewish Agency, which we did in the spring of '84. That was the beginning.

Then what I did is I worked through another vehicle called the International Young Leadership Forum, the national people here, to push for the creation of overseas Jewish Agency committees in all local federations. The Council of Jewish Federations picked up on the idea and created a national organizing factor for Jewish Agency committees of local federations. That became a significant factor early on. I say early on; I'm talking about by '85 or '86. Already there were serious stirrings to see what the Jewish Agency was doing in a much stronger way than ever before. Heretofore it was the province of a handful of people.

Now Max Fisher admits that one of the things that I was able to do was get people interested in the Agency, and he said that he was never able to get people here in America interested in being involved in the Jewish Agency. So you began to have these kinds of changes. Hoffberger did get more Diaspora leadership involved in a more meaningful way. These disruptions and changes basically ushered in Mendel Kaplan. Kaplan would not have come in, this is my opinion, if it weren't for the fact that the Agency was under siege, and American Jewish leadership was really being doubted by a growing constituency.

It began with San Francisco but it was a cacophony of voices that began to pick up on our themes of depoliticizing, accountability, streamlining the system, following the dollar. These became like truisms throughout America. Voices in St. Louis and voices in Pittsburgh and voices in Chicago and voices in Los Angeles all began to say the same thing. It was a refrain you were hearing. It was the chorus now sounding.

Kaplan, who is a real Israelophile--

Glaser: Is he the man from South Africa?

Lurie: Yes. Kaplan was the dark horse, if you will. By the way, the other candidate was Ray Epstein, the one who was very helpful, I told you, in the meeting in '84. These were the two candidates

for head of the Jewish Agency; both of them, by the way, very, very good. In the choice of Kaplan, they chose somebody who was committed to change and who had a strong presence in Israel, which was one of the things we were calling for. It could not be just somebody who left it as laissez-faire. If you are going to make a system accountable, you have to spend significant time there. One of the things that a number of our papers that I wrote said is how do you follow-up on a \$400 or \$500 million system by going there four times a year?

Glaser: Is the office of the Jewish Agency--?

Lurie: It's in Jerusalem. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The chairman of the board, which is the lay head of it, who was Hoffberger and before him Fisher, these people would go to Israel four times, maybe five times, a year. They would spend anywhere from five days to maybe two weeks max at any one of those trips.

Glaser: Are you saying that Mendel Kaplan is the lay head? I thought he was the executive.

Lurie: Mendel Kaplan is the lay head, and he spends almost six months a year in Israel.

Glaser: Who is the professional head of it?

Lurie: Simcha Dinitz. Kaplan is a real presence. He's hands-on. So Kaplan was ushered in by this. Kaplan instituted major reforms in the Agency as far as helping depoliticize it to a certain degree, streamlining it where it virtually has half the work force that it had when we began to complain, and clear lines of accountability now. It's an agency that has promoted merit, so it's a meritocracy as far as its director generals. There is a coherency.

Moshe Nativ is the director general of the Agency, and under him are all the other director generals of the various departments. The Agency can function; it can move. Thank God, because with all the needs today it needs to be a first-rate organization, and it is. Is it perfect? No. But this Federation isn't perfect either.

World Zionist Organization

Glaser: What is the relationship of the Jewish Agency to the World Zionist Organization?

Lurie: Fifty percent of the Jewish Agency's board of governors is composed of members of the World Zionist Organization.

Glaser: You've also had your fights with them too, haven't you?

Lurie: Fights with the World Zionist Organization are strictly on the basis that they politicize the Agency. I said from the very beginning, that I don't care what happens to the World Zionist Organization. That's their business, not mine. I just don't want them telling me how to spend our money. Our money is Diaspora's money. Why do we have to have people who are politically appointed or are coming from organizations--.

For instance, Hadassah raises a lot of money for Israel, it was \$50-something million, maybe it's \$60 million now, I don't know. Hadassah doesn't put one penny into the Jewish Agency pool. Into that \$400 million that is allocated, they don't put one penny. They allocate their own money. But through the WZO they sit on the board of the Jewish Agency and say where the money that comes from federations should go. That doesn't make any sense to me. They want to tell us where that money goes, then let their money come into the pot too.

I've been outspoken in that. I just think the way it's constructed is not healthy. It doesn't enthuse the fundraisers because they see a group of people that are non-donors, not involved, uninterested with our Federation system, even non-cooperative with our Federation system, allocating 50 percent of the proceeds. I say 50 percent, they do it collectively, they don't do it individually.

Plus, if that wasn't bad enough, what you have is that over 30 percent, I think it's 38 percent, of the constituency of the World Zionist Organization automatically come as a result of the party's last election for Israeli positions in the Knesset. Let's say the Likud got 50 percent of the votes (obviously it never has), then it would get 19 percent of the say of the direction of the World Zionist Organization--automatically. It's tied into the political system of Israel, as well as being tied into a world-wide Zionist system that isn't cooperating with us in the fundraising that we do. Never made any sense to me.

Glaser: Didn't you, through the Federation membership in ARZA [Association of Reform Zionists of America], try to make some reform in the World Zionist Organization?

Lurie: I didn't play really any role in that. I looked on it with favor because I felt that it was very healthy, and in fact they have revolutionized the World Zionist Organization. Because ARZA and Merkaz, which is the Conservative movement's program, along with

Hadassah are now, I think, the majority of the World Zionist Organization's voting members. The Agency is no longer as politicized as it was before. Clearly, it's much better. ARZA and Merkaz have played very important roles in doing that through the last WZO Congress and their enhanced position.

Glaser: Aside from the political aspect, wasn't it the fact that Orthodox Jewry was in control of World Zionist Organization?

Lurie: No. Orthodox Jewry was never in control of the World Zionist Organization. Well, I told you who was in control. The political parties were really in control. They were the ones that had all the major party keys and appointments, et cetera.

Glaser: In 1987, there was a dispute with ARZA over its backing of Akiva Lewinsky for the head of the World Zionist Organization.

Lurie: They sold out.

Glaser: Do you want to tell me about that?

Lurie: It was their first encounter with their new-found strength. For giving certain key appointments in the World Zionist Organization, they traded away their vote for who would be the professional head of the Jewish Agency, which is now Simcha Dinitz. Leon Dulchin had been forced to resign, and that was during Hoffberger's leadership, by the way. So again, I don't want to discredit Hoffberger entirely at all. He did certain very good things. Coming down on Dulchin was absolutely necessary; it was mandatory because of all the problems that were going on Israel. The Bank Leumi scandal was the event that brought down Dulchin.

Akiva Lewinsky was the treasurer of the Jewish Agency. A well-meaning man, boring, terminally boring, who didn't have any terminal facility. Ask him a question and in one hour he would give you an answer. This is the guy they wanted to put up to be the head of the Jewish Agency. A nice man, not terribly strong, absolutely the wrong type of person, and ARZA was going along with it. Why? Because they were going to get something out of it. So I blasted ARZA.

That was a beginner's mistake. I don't think they really have done anything of the kind since then. That was just one of those things. When I say ARZA, it was a handful of leaders. If they would have gone to their rank and file and said, "Would you vote for Akiva Lewinsky? Here's his curriculum vitae and here's what he's done for the Agency." The answer would have been, "No. We want somebody exciting who's got a vision, who will instil pride in what we're doing." None of that.

By the way, Dinitz is much, much better. I was not in favor of his candidacy when he first came in, but he is a very articulate spokesman for the Agency.

XXIII PROJECTS IN ISRAEL

Jewish Agency's Creative and Innovative Fund

Lurie: You asked about the Creative and Innovative Fund. Remember now, going back to the concept of post-heroic, there was a clear need to bring the Diaspora and Israel closer together in order to preserve the joint enterprise of Jewish statehood and Diaspora Jewry. Had it been a personal basis? Well, how could it be on a personal basis unless there are shared values? What we funded were programs that emphasized shared values: democracy, pluralism, tolerance. These are not household words in Israel. There are a lot of Israelis that want to promote them. Teddy Kollek obviously jumps to mind.

Nevertheless, what we began to fund were programs in that area, and what happened was that that became a wedge that ARZA and others used. They said, "San Francisco is funding pluralism." They pushed the Agency like crazy, using the threat of going to local federations because we had done it. Lo and behold, a Creative and Innovative Fund came out of the Agency, which was really nothing different from what we were doing with our \$100,000, except they were doing it with \$9 million.

Glaser: Did they ask you to put your money into that?

Lurie: They never asked us to put our money into it. Our money has never been a subject of conversation in years. They would probably have liked us to put our money in there, but they never formally asked us to do so. At least I can't remember it. We talked about doing it; we talked about the possibility. I don't think we ever got a communication from the Agency, because they never wanted to acknowledge any longer that we were even doing the separate funding.

Glaser: In the overseas committee minutes of March 10, 1988, there is a statement that Stanley Horowitz is encouraging earmarking funds

for projects in Israel through the UJA to the Creative and Innovative Fund, and the overseas committee agreed.

Lurie: We agreed with the idea, but we never did it. We were never asked to do it. Nobody ever said to us, "You know, you've got this \$100,000 that you've been giving through your Amuta for these kinds of creative and innovative projects. In all the areas now that we are doing \$9 million worth of, would you come in?" Nobody ever asked us. We talked about it, but we never went anyplace.

Glaser: Aside from Project Renewal that your Amuta, or the Jerusalem office oversaw, is there a--

Lurie: Now the Amuta is involved in Project Renewal. Earlier on it wasn't at all.

Glaser: What other kinds of projects is it involved in?

Lurie: The Amuta?

Glaser: Yes.

Lurie: There's a whole list of programs that we supported. Plus we have now had our third retreat, where we get together for up to two days of interaction. This year was only one full day; the year before it was two days. The year before that, it was a day and a half.

Glaser: This is in Jerusalem?

Lurie: Two of them have been in Jerusalem--the first and the third. The second one was up in Tiberias.

Caesarea Report and Jewish Agency Self-Study

Glaser: That reminds me, what was the Caesarea Report?

Lurie: The Caesarea Study, or Report, was an attempt under Max Fisher's leadership to have the World Zionist Organization get to know members of the Karen Hayesod and the United Israel Appeal better. It was like two different camps, or three different camps. It was an attempt to personalize and to integrate the various members of the Jewish Agency board of governors so that they could act not as Zionists and not as fundraisers but as Jews together. Nice idea. Only thing, little ever came out of it.

So out of that came the self-study of the Jewish Agency. That was the first step. I had insisted from the very beginning--now this goes back to '83 where I raised my voice and they basically just cut me off. Although it was interesting, it was the only time that I heard Fisher and Hoffberger totally disagree with one another publicly. I said, "I think the Caesarea report and the self-study are important." And, by the way, I urged the CJF to have a simultaneous process where federations are kept up to date with what the Caesarea process was doing. "Because," I said, "with self-studies usually nothing ever happens." The same thing I said to you.

Do you know what happened? If you have an outside party that looks at it, there's going to be real pressure on them to do something about it. If there's no outside pressure, the chances of doing it is remote. CJF stonewalled it. Schwartz did nothing, which was his modus operandi basically. He is afraid of change and, as a consequence, he basically froze at the stick for anything of any major consequence. He just froze. He refused to move.

The Agency in the self-study never asked the fundamental question, which I had raised at the board of governors meeting in June of 1983. What was the fundamental question? The self-study should examine the partnership itself. It never asked should there be a separation of the WZO from the Jewish Agency? That was the issue, the issue. Not secondary to it; it was the primary issue. They refused to look at that issue. So I raised it.

There was going to be a change of guard; that summer Hoffberger was going to become the chairman of the board. Up until then I had been very active in the Agency--attending Agency meetings and championing Project Renewal in particular, and I was rather well-known by the group by then. I got up and said what I thought was necessary to the plenum. Hoffberger got up and said, "Brian Lurie is right. In my chairmanship, in my coming in, I'll make sure we study the partnership." Fisher then got up after Hoffberger and said the following: "I rarely have ever disagreed with my colleague and friend, Chuck Hoffberger, but he's mistaken. There should be no study of the partnership. That would be a terrible mistake. Brian Lurie is trying to destroy the Jewish Agency."

Now my wife, who had never been in Israel before, sitting next to me in this meeting, grabs my arm and says, "Brian, say something. Say something." I don't know if you know Fisher at all or if you have ever heard him speak. Fisher's way is never to attack. It was totally out of character. I've never seen him before or since ever do what he did with me. Because Fisher's way

to kill his enemies, and I was clearly his enemy at the time, is to embrace. If somebody's causing trouble, you bring them close, you embrace them. That's how you take care of them. That was Fisher's way. That he would say about me, "He's trying to destroy the Jewish Agency"--that was totally out of character.

Glaser: What did you do?

Lurie: I didn't do anything. I just waited and waited and waited, and a whole bunch of statements came up pro and con, arguing back and forth. I finally got up and I said, "Max, I'm really terribly, terribly sorry that you feel that way because, in fact, I know so many people in this room, and I think they understand now that all I really want is to build a stronger Jewish Agency."

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Lurie: I put a motion on the floor, which was from the San Francisco Federation, that there should be a study of the partnership. That was a motion that we had passed in San Francisco. I was bringing it to the floor of the assembly. I said, "Based on Chuck Hoffberger's statement, and since he'll be the next chairman of the board of governors, that there will be in fact a study, I will withdraw my motion." There was much applause and I sat down.

Glaser: So you did a Max Fisher.

Lurie: I did a Max Fisher. The system was such an imperfect system. We all live with imperfection, unfortunately. That's the human condition. This organization was so imperfect, it was almost mind-boggling. It would have major bylaw changes that were never sent out before they asked for approval. They would hand them out just before they were going to take a vote. One mistake after another. There was no real care in my early days on how they appeared to anybody else but themselves. It was a combination of arrogance and stupidity, but that's how the place was run. It isn't run like that any more. It's run well by thoughtful people who do care about Diaspora input. Thank God.

Anyhow, this Federation played a role that, frankly, our national UJA and CJF should have played, which was to transform the Jewish Agency. UJA played no role really in that; CJF played some role by creating this Jewish Agency committee and helping force change. But frankly, the one you have to look at for credit (for this book, I'll say it) this Federation had a greater impact on changing the Agency than any other national or international entity. As I said, it was clearly for the better.

International Young Leadership Meeting and Israel Forum

Glaser: What is or what was the Israel Forum?

Lurie: The Israel Forum was one of the by-products of the International Young Leadership meeting that took place first in S'dom. I don't even have the first date of that, but it was 1984 or 1983.

Glaser: I have 1986 for the Forum itself.

Lurie: 1986? No. It was earlier, I think '84. Anyhow, it was a meeting of international leadership, primarily from America and Israel. The first meeting took place in S'dom on the date that we can't remember.

Glaser: Are you saying S'dom or Sidon?

Lurie: S'dom, Sodom, Sodom and Gomorrah? S'dom at the Dead Sea. It was the most moving meeting that I've ever been at. My feelings about meetings are a little bit different than studies. Some meetings really do produce something. They actually cause action. They move to action. Studies only study. This meeting was wonderful; it was one of the highlights of my adult experience. Where a group of Israelis and a group of American Jews got together and were totally honest with one another and opened their hearts to one another. Basically, it was the end of my experiencing Israel saying, "We're right, you guys are passive viewers of history, and we are the actors of history." There was the dropping of the veil and saying, "We need you; we've made plenty of mistakes. How do we move forward together?" This was from the elite of Israeli society.

Glaser: Who was the sponsoring organization?

Lurie: It was an interesting group of people. The sponsoring organization turned out to be the Jewish Agency. They're the ones who put the money up for it. But they got really the creme de la creme of the young Israelis to participate in this, and they had nothing to do with the Jewish Agency. The American side was nowhere near as stellar. We had some congressmen; we had academics; we had rabbis; we had a few federation types, a lot of young leadership from UJA. The Israeli side was a Who's Who. I can't tell you how I enjoyed this. It was so refreshing. It was so exciting to be part of the process. There was an open mike that went on for four hours where everybody got up and said whatever they wanted to say about it. This was after the meeting had gone on for about a day and a half. I've never heard expressions like this. The arrogance was gone.

Glaser: Did anything further come out of this?

Lurie: That led to the creation of the Israel Forum. There was another meeting and then from that second meeting they created the Israel Forum, which was an ongoing group of these young Israelis that met in Israel and did projects. I gave the keynote address at the first one along with Yaron Ezrachi. He's a professor of political science at Hebrew University, a brilliant guy. He was considered one of the whiz kids of Israel. He made a speech about the arrogance of power; very against Israel's government and Israel's use of power.

I gave a speech which talked about a new beginning and a new relationship based on how we'd gone through historical moments and how we had opportunities and what we should do with this opportunity. I gave four or five different possibilities; I talked about a Jewish peace corps. That Jewish peace corps was translated into OTZMA. The person who picked it up was a guy by the name of Nechemiah Degan, who shortly thereafter became the chief educational officer of the Israeli Army. He wrote this up in book form. It was the Israelis who grabbed on to it and really ran with it. They were terrific. I gave the speech and they did the work.

I'm going to have to stop here, because I have to give a speech later on and I'm losing my voice.

OTZMA

[Interview 8: August 1, 1991] ##

Glaser: At our last session you talked about OTZMA ["power" in Hebrew], which came out of the International Young Leadership conference. Would you go into detail about what OTZMA is and if it's been effective?

Lurie: I think I mentioned last time that one of the really moving, unusual, outstanding occasions of my life was at this International Young Leadership meeting at Moriah in S'dom. I was one of the two keynote speakers, and I gave a speech in which there was a call to create a Jewish peace corps. That's what I called it, a Jewish peace corps.

There was a person in the audience by the name of Uri Gordon. Uri at that time was the political head of the Youth Aliyah department of the Jewish Agency. I appealed to Uri that instead of spending money on having Israeli youth from residential

towns staying in these Youth Aliyah villages (they are basically places for kids between the ages of fourteen and eighteen), instead of using the village for educating development-town kids, to think about filling these Youth Aliyah villages with 40,000-50,000 Diaspora youth and creating some kind of a peace corps where they're sent all over the world. That challenge came out and I didn't say much more than that.

Because they paired up Israelis with Americans, my roommate was Nechemiah Degan, who by the way is going to go to work with me. He is going to come from Israel and move to New York. It's a piece of business I have to conduct today to finish it off. This fellow at the time was a general in the Israeli air force. He was the head of all helicopter pilots. Then subsequently he became the chief educational officer of the Israeli army.

Anyhow, Degan listened to the speech, sat down and wrote a ninety page statement of how to create this Jewish peace corps from A to Z. I gave the idea but this guy then wrote the thing up. The reason I bring it up the way I am is this was always a partnership between Israelis and Americans. That's what was really so unique about OTZMA. It wasn't some Israeli program that they gave to us or some American program. From the very inception of it it was a shared program. Somewhere between fifty-five and seventy-five kids have been going. I don't know if this is its fifth year. They go for a year of learning and work in Israel. It has been very successful. Not in numbers, because obviously I talked about thousands and we never had more than seventy-five. So the numbers obviously were never there. But it's been a tremendous program for getting Diaspora kids to think about working in Jewish life.

There is a networking that goes on between the Israelis and the Israel Forum and these kids because when they go on the OTZMA program these kids are adopted for the full year by an Israeli family. So again, looking at my goal of creating bridges between Diaspora and Israel, this program is highly successful. It has really motivated an awful lot of outstanding college age kids to think seriously about Jewish life and Jewish commitment.

Glaser: How is this different from Sherut L'Am?

Lurie: There is no such partnership in Sherut L'Am. Remember now, the Council of Jewish Federations works in conjunction with the Israel Forum for the recruitment and the programming so there is cooperation. Sherut L'Am is strictly put on by Noar Ve Hechalutz, the Youth and Pioneering Department of the Jewish Agency. It was part of the WZO. Now they've reconstructed, so it's hard to tell you where it is in the configuration. It's part of the education consortium. At that time it was a separate standing department.

That's how Sherut L'Am was run. By the way, it is a good program, but it didn't have anywhere near the bridging qualities and the relationships of OTZMA because this thing extends way beyond just the kids. As we said, it relates to Israeli families, it relates to a lot of other Americans, et cetera.

More on Relationship to United Jewish Appeal

- Glaser: In 1988 Stanley Horowitz encouraged earmarking funds for the UJA to the Creative and Innovative Fund. The San Francisco overseas committee agreed to that. What is the significance of that?
- Lurie: Many things happened because of what San Francisco did. I'm talking about this overseas Jewish Agency agenda. One of the things that happened was the creation of this Creative and Innovative Fund. That's what we called our \$100,000 allocation. It was for creative and innovative programs in Israel. So the Agency and people who looked at it realized that this was a good idea. Let's have some free dollars that can go and do start-ups, or fund in different areas than have been the traditional areas of the Jewish Agency. That's what Stanley was talking about. That's the genesis of it.
- Glaser: Does that mean that the Federation was no longer in an adversarial position to the UJA?
- Lurie: We haven't been in an adversarial position with the UJA for a long time.
- Glaser: Well, this was in 1988.
- Lurie: But I would say before then, from the time that Mendel Kaplan came in. He's been president four years. This is '91, so from '87 we have been non-adversarial. We've been supportive all the way. That's for all of our national agencies. From time to time I go off on a little tangent with something that's happened with one of the national agencies, but basically I and this Federation have been supportive.
- Glaser: A year before Mendel Kaplan came, in 1986, you made a statement to the board that the Federation's allocation of \$72,600 to three overseas projects might well be the most remembered allocation in the history of the Federation. What were those allocations? Was Project Renewal one?

Lurie: No. They had to do with earmarking. They had to do with taking money out of the system. They had to do with redirection of funds.

Glaser: I thought that was \$100,000 that you took out?

Lurie: Yes. We did take the \$100,000, but then you had to allocate it. This was the allocation of the money.

Glaser: Where did you allocate it?

Lurie: I don't remember--to various worthwhile projects in Israel.

Missions to Israel

Glaser: When it came to missions you were a real pusher on that. You made the statement that your special fundraising mission for sixty young leaders was the first subsidized mission with campaign responsibilities.

Lurie: It wasn't young, although a lot of them were young. The Advance Sixty was the name of the mission. The leader of it was Ken Colvin. Even then he wasn't a young man. So it wasn't young but it had a lot of young people in it. It was the first subsidized worker mission to Israel.

Glaser: What does that mean? What was the responsibility?

Lurie: Their trip was subsidized virtually entirely except for some registration fee. Again, that was unheard of. The only missions that were subsidized were the Prime Minister's Mission nationally. This was a worker mission. People had to commit themselves to solicit twenty cards face-to-face when they came back, plus make a certain size gift. There were four commitments: go on the mission, go through solicitor training, then solicit twenty face-to-face gifts, as well as make some kind of a decent gift. It was a stunning success, one of the smartest things I've ever encouraged. I believe it was Norman Rosenblatt's idea.

Glaser: So they knew ahead of time--.

Lurie: What the responsibilities were.

Diaspora and Israel

- Glaser: For a lot of American Jews, Israel provides their only link to Judaism. What does that say for the future of Judaism?
- Lurie: Not healthy. Not enough. It's understandable but it's not enough. We, the leadership in the American Jewish community, have to broaden that.
- Glaser: You have, as everybody says, your passion for Israel. But with that you also have a passion for Jewish education. So you must perceive this as a great need.
- Lurie: Absolutely. To vicariously live in that way is to basically not have any future. It's a terrible mistake. What I will be doing at the UJA is being much more holistic. My first worry has to be Israel and overseas needs, but I'm still going to be very concerned about the development of the local Jewish community here in America. I got to be. Because I'm there doesn't mean I stop worrying about here. Wayne Feinstein has to worry more than I do about what's happening in San Francisco. That's his job. But in my dealing with Wayne about the international, if he says to me, "Brian, I'm worried about such and such happening in San Francisco", I'm not going to say to him, "Well, I couldn't care less about that." I care. I'm just using him as an example. That's true of anybody anywhere.
- Glaser: Do you have any sense of how to go about solving this situation?
- Lurie: Yes. I'm not going to talk about that.
- Glaser: Well, do you think future generations will be knowledgeable Jews?
- Lurie: Better than they are now, yes. Take for instance just here in San Francisco. We had this confirmation program to Israel; over 2,000 have gone. You take OTZMA; we produced about 25 percent of the people who have gone. Then you have a lot of kids going on Israel programs to universities. If you start adding up, it's not superficial. It's much more profound. They start learning Hebrew and history, identity. We're going to have a group of people fifteen, twenty years from now that is far more sophisticated, far more Jewish than the present leadership.

This is not a panacea. There are lots of illustrations where you send kids over there, they love it, but they don't see the connection to historical Judaism or to Jewishness at all. They just see it as a vibrant, dynamic place, which it is. Exciting, stimulating, and that's the end of it. There are a lot of those kinds of people. That's why the auspices is very

important. Sherut L'Am, it would be much easier to end up like that than it would be on the OTZMA program. The OTZMA program has a Jewish programmatic element: educational. It is sensitive to the issue of a more diverse, well-rounded Israel, historical Israel, et cetera.

But again, that isn't foolproof because young people are very impressionable and they are going to walk away with what they want to walk away with, not what you're trying to give them. Chances are you're going to have more youth better educated, deeper rooted to Judaism than in the past. Although you'll still have x, y, z, numbers that love Israel but don't see any association with Judaism.

Glaser: What can one do?

Lurie: You only can try.

XXIV SUMMING UP

Leaving the San Francisco Federation

Glaser: We're going to have a summing up, Brian. Why did you stay here so long?

Lurie: Well, it probably is all personal. First of all, my divorce was emotionally catastrophic for me. I don't think almost anybody except my present wife and my very closest friends realize what a trauma that was for me. That occurred a number of years ago. It was about at the eight-, nine-year point of my tenure here, something like that. Maybe logically, if I wouldn't have been going through that, I would have left at that time. This UJA job could have been available another time to me. Not that this is not a natural time for me to take this. It is the most natural and the best time for me to take that job.

As I mentioned before, the job was offered to me previously. If I wouldn't have gone on the route of attacking the Jewish Agency, it would have been open to me at another time as well. I would have just followed Irving Bernstein, so that would have meant that Stanley Horowitz would not have had the job. But I was neither a candidate myself nor was the national leadership prepared to have me because of the positions I was taking vis-a-vis the Jewish Agency. But a lot of that had to do with what was going on in my own life. If I thought I could have led nationally I might not have done what I did here. But because I saw that I could not leave here for personal reasons, I began to create a national federation out of this place.

So there was the personal thing. The personal thing was the unraveling of my first marriage, the fact that I had two sons from that first marriage that I felt absolutely unable to leave. I interviewed for one serious job at the logical point. When I say logical, I'm talking about after roughly seven, eight, nine, ten years here. That would have been a logical time for me to move on, right around my fortieth birthday, something like that. I

interviewed for the American Jewish Committee. The job had just come opened. Bert Gold had just stepped down, the chairman wanted me to be the exec and Bert himself wanted me to follow him. I was at that point, at least in inner circles, the leading candidate. In the process of interviewing I totally blew myself out of the water. I didn't want the job because I couldn't leave my kids, absolutely could not leave my kids.

Then I got remarried to a woman who was born and bred here, who did not want to go to New York, and I did not want to go to New York. Then I had two more children and this is everybody's home. Now I have four children, so it looked like I was staying. About three years ago I decided I had to leave, I just had to. The truth about this job is that I could make anything of it I want. The leadership are so wonderful to me that they would tolerate almost any type of behavior on my part. In other words, my working hours, what I emphasize, what I don't emphasize. Because I do enough good on balance to justify my continuing as executive here.

I'm not sure that would have continued, but let's say that's the way it was up until very recently. But I knew that it wasn't right. I also knew that I stayed too long. That's why I've cut my bridges. I really went out and told people I was leaving. I had no job. I had no idea what I was going to do. I've spent the better part of the last three years thinking about what I was going to do. But I never thought about the UJA.

Glaser: Did you give notice three years ago?

Lurie: I officially gave notice about a little over a year ago. It was a year ago in June that I gave notice. But I started telling my friends here and the major leaders that I was leaving two years before that. But I said on my fiftieth birthday, so that was going to be another year down the road from now. I was leaving myself a little bit more time. But nobody discussed it with me. It was my idea, my agenda, and to burn bridges, deliberately.

Glaser: That's kind of scary, isn't it?

Lurie: Well, with four years on the clock, it wasn't so scary. But as the clock got closer it got scarier.

A Retrospective as Federation Executive

Glaser: What do you think are your greatest achievements here with the San Francisco Federation?

Lurie: I don't know. In other words a lot of things have happened, but I don't know. We have survived each other.

Glaser: And failures?

Lurie: My biggest failure is the fact that my two older sons did not live all the time with me. That's my biggest personal failure. We had joint custody. I remember I used to go into their rooms when they weren't with me and I would weep. Very painful. Professionally my biggest failure: the first thing I wanted to create here was a family retreat facility. I talked to the leadership of Camp Swig about an association there, a building process down there. I looked at property in Sonoma. Never did it. Could have done it.

Glaser: Why didn't Camp Swig work out? Synagogues use it.

Lurie: We were going to build a beautiful facility to house 100 adults. It was going to be something way different than what they had built to date. Something of real high quality, private bathrooms and lodges and whatever. It wasn't done because I didn't have the energy to do it. That's the only reason.

Glaser: That could have been an educational-type setting.

Lurie: That's what it was going to be and that was a real failure. I didn't do that.

Glaser: How do you view yourself as an administrator?

Lurie: Better than most people think.

Glaser: How do people view you?

Lurie: People think I'm terrible. There is a wonderful story that was told to me because I didn't hear it directly. At the G.A. in New Orleans--I was only there for one day, twenty-four hours. Mendel Kaplan, who is my friend, spoke downstairs. I grabbed Mendel and said, "I want you to speak to our delegation." After he got done speaking to the entire body, we went up to Annette Dobbs' suite. She was the president of the Federation at the time. I introduced Mendel and he spoke to our group, including East Bay and San Jose people. I asked Mendel some very pointed questions but all in good humor, supportive but yet sharp. I really pressed him about changes in the Agency.

The meeting concluded and everybody thought it was wonderful--here's Mendel speaking specially to Bay Area people. Two of San Francisco's lay leadership are walking out of the room and they say, "Gee, Brian's leaving today. Do you think he remembered to bring the voting cards?" (Delegates need voting

cards for resolutions.) The other one said, "Gee, I don't know, but isn't he wonderful about the way he can do these things, get Mendel Kaplan to speak." It was like, "He does these extraordinary things that are unusual but he can't find his way to the bathroom."

Glaser: Not the nitty-gritty. [laughter]

Lurie: So I am a much better administrator than people think. In fact, if you went around and you talked to Nancy Hair, who is our chief financial officer; or Phyllis Cook, endowment; or Nate Levine, campaign; or even Tracy, although least of all Tracy right now. Those first three because they have departments. I think you'll find something a little different from what the normal perception is. I am much more hands-on than people would have thought. Now I'm not talking about the last six months--I don't even know where my hands have been. But I can administer very well. Do you know what the major talent of an administrator is?

Glaser: To leave people alone?

Lurie: Allowing good people to work and supporting them and making them feel good about what they're doing. That's the real important job. Also, they know they have total access to me if they have a problem. The wrong kind of administrator is where somebody sits on top and holds them. Now, mind you, I don't think I have a lay leader that hasn't made some fun of my administrative talents. You'll never hear a statement like this. God, I don't even bother. I just sort of pass it off, shine it on.

In the UJA job I'm taking, I won't be involved. I will be involved in some personnel matters, and I have already, because I want to bring in some people who are not there. But I'm not going to get involved in the running of the organization at all. Not even a whit. I don't even want to bother.

Glaser: You're going to leave this to the department heads?

Lurie: I'm going to leave it to Morris Sherman, who is chief operating officer of the organization, and the chief financial officer, Lee Twersky. They are both excellent and it's their job, not mine.

Glaser: So you're going to be the idea man?

Lurie: I was hired to do that and to really basically raise money and set a tone and that's what I'm going to do. It's way too big. This is much smaller. This is an operation where you can walk up and down the halls. That place is enormous.

Fundraising for UJA

Glaser: Your Operation Exodus was very successful, one of the most successful in the country.

Lurie: No. It was the most successful.

Glaser: The most. But what are you going to do for an encore?

Lurie: We're going to make that look like nothing.

Glaser: Are you sure about that?

Lurie: Yes. I'm already working on it.

Glaser: Of course you are, it's part of the UJA. But I think people have really extended themselves tremendously for the first Operation Exodus. Can you expect that the same people are going to give again over and above their federation commitment?

Lurie: The UJA is in the process of putting together a mega-gift group. It is being chaired by Charles Bronfman and Leslie Wexner. Leslie is the head of The Limited. These two gentlemen are going to lead an effort that probably will involve at least 150 people, minimum gift \$1 million.

Glaser: You expect 150 people?

Lurie: At least.

Glaser: Wow.

Lurie: This is for the continuation of Exodus. These are new gifts over and above what has been given already. In the fundraising world the idea that people have tapped out is nonsense. It's only some people, it's not all people. Some people are stretched to the maximum. They cannot give anymore. But there are a number of people who can give a lot more. I hope that we will have at least a half a dozen people in this town on that list of those who give \$1 million and over annually to the system, to Exodus/annual campaign. By the way, that will be the requirement--it won't be just Exodus. Although we will be soliciting for Exodus, to get into the group you'll have to give a combined gift of no less than \$1 million annually. (I hope.)

Glaser: What does being in the group mean?

Lurie: Well, the concept here is that there will be an annual meeting of this group.

Glaser: They have to have some payback for this, right?

Lurie: Yes. It will be a very unusual program. Right now there is what's called the International Leadership Reunion (ILR). That's for givers of a quarter of a million dollars or more from around the world. But right now that one is highly social. It is a wonderful program; it will be continued. But this one will be much more of a business nature. It will be dealing with Jewish issues and Jewish problems, Jewish identity, Jewish culture. It will be an action-oriented group. It won't be just to get together.

Glaser: Action-oriented?

Lurie: Action-oriented. That's the idea. Now again, I'm sharing ideas with you that have not been accepted per se, although the leadership is in place and they are now recruiting a core group.

Glaser: The statement has been made that the federation is strengthened by relationship to Israel, that donors need federation in order to make their identification in Israel. Do you agree with that?

Lurie: Yes and no. For most people it's true, but there are a lot of individuals who can easily on their own connect with Israel. For instance, the two people I talked about, they can pick up the phone and call anybody in Israel any time they want. They don't need any third party to get involved. Andy and Charles Bronfman were just invited by Simcha Dinitz to go to the Soviet Union to tour around with him to see what's happening. They don't need organizations, although this is somewhat organizational. They have all these high connections and they can get anything they want whenever they want.

The reason that we need them and they should associate with the establishment is because the establishment is bigger than any one of them. If you don't have a strong central body, no matter what you are doing on the periphery, it is weakened. These people have to be brought back in. These mega-donors are on the periphery right now and they need to be central.

Glaser: Bronfman surely is not on the periphery.

Lurie: He certainly is as far as what his priorities are right now.

Glaser: Isn't he the head of--

Lurie: World Jewish Congress?

Glaser: Yes.

Lurie: That's his brother. That's Edgar.

Glaser: I see.

Lurie: But Charles is the largest single donor to the "Jewish Establishment" in the world. But he gives far more money away to his own particular projects, plus that's where his efforts go. And he understands this. Both of them do. That's why they are going to do this. They understand that they need to help the central instrument as well.

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Glaser: How do you view the Federation today vis-a-vis when you came?

Lurie: It was a sleepy Federation. I remember when Mike Papo, who was at that time one of two members of the planning department, told me that all summer long all he did was read files. There was nothing to do. That was not atypical. I basically brought a New York tempo back to this place, so it is a twelve-month operation. It probably had a third the staff that it has now. We're in so many different areas that other federations couldn't even relate to. When I came here there were no offices outside of San Francisco. There was only one central office. It was a nice small operation. Now it's a big Jewish business with a lot of outstanding lay and professional people running around doing all kinds of good things. It's really like night and day. It's a transformed organization.

Glaser: Is there anything that you've left unfinished?

Lurie: I gave you the major thing that I haven't done, which is the adult retreat facility, for family camping. There are tons of things that I haven't finished here. Whatever I've done it's only a plateau. There is a tremendous amount that can be done in addition. I'm sure Wayne will do it. If you stop you lose. If you don't expand and push--. This is not a time for consolidation, it's a time for further growth for this Federation.

Glaser: Where do you think this community will go in your absence?

Lurie: It will probably move a little bit slower in the next several years until Wayne really gets his sea legs here, until the leadership has a relationship with him with the kind of trust that I know they will have. So things will slow down a bit, but I'm sure there will also be a lot of other things. It will move forward.

Glaser: What do you see as the community's problems?

Lurie: The major problem here is assimilation. That is the beginning, the middle, the end. Assimilation and isolation. If you're living in northern California, why go someplace else?

Glaser: Why is that a negative?

Lurie: Because it's not Jewish. The concept of Judaism is to have an inherent concern about Jews everywhere, to worry about the whole sense of Jewish history and destiny. If you really get locked up in your own little area as if nothing else is really terribly important--I'm not suggesting this is so, I'm just trying to be somewhat responsive to your question in a general way. If you have one place that is so much yours and everything else is not very important, that isn't the Jewish way.

Glaser: But Operation Exodus gives a lie to what you've just said.

Lurie: No, that's money.

Glaser: But that's concern.

Lurie: Yes, it's concern, but I said the biggest problem we have is assimilation and isolation. The reason being that this is a very open, very pluralistic society. Also, it's a very beautiful, wonderful place to live. I don't know too many places where friends of mine have three homes and all three of the homes are within 300-400 miles--San Francisco, Atherton, Tahoe. In New York, or any place back East, you would have a house in New York, you might have a house in Maine, and then you would have a house in Florida or some place. You have a sense of movement, that you're not static. Here your whole life revolves around this beautiful northern California area.

Glaser: Then you're calling Californians provincial.

Lurie: They are. For good reason. Why go back to New York when it's 100 degrees with 99 percent humidity? You'd have to be crazy. To be really involved in Jewish life, you've got to be a little crazy.

Glaser: Certainly, Brian, having three homes doesn't make one less involved or more provincial.

Lurie: No, but I'm trying to suggest something else. I'm saying that there is enough diversity and enough beauty of a variegated nature to hold people right here. They don't feel that they have to travel or they have to move out. Sure they take trips to Europe, if they can afford it, and other things. They go to Israel on occasion.

There is a wonderful story. The story is that Moses was up on Sinai and Aaron wasn't there. It was God and Moses, panim el panim, face to face. God said to Moses, "Moses, where do you want to take the children of Israel?" "Hu ma gam game--Moses stuttered and was thick of lip." That's why Aaron always spoke for him. Moses began to answer God and began to say, "C-c-c-c-c." And God thought he was trying to say Canaan, but he was really trying to say California. [laughter]

So that makes us provincial. I'm part of it. You asked a question, why did I stay so long? I love this place. It gets into your blood. It's your home. How lucky, how fortunate we are to have it as our home. Ergo, to take on bigger challenges and bigger responsibilities, which do exist outside of San Francisco, for a whole bunch of us is very difficult. I'm talking about on the Jewish scene.

It's very difficult to get Jewish leaders here in San Francisco to participate nationally, very difficult. Sure it's 3,000 miles away, that's problem number one. But problem number two is, again, we're very happy here. When you're content you don't go out, which is healthy. Call it provincial or call it very healthy, and frankly it's very lucky to be able to live in a place like this. But it does work against assuming a sense of responsibility for people outside of this area.

Sure we've been building bridges and there are a lot of very committed Jews here that constantly think about Jews some place else. But the best way to think about something else is by going, by being more involved.

Glaser: What is the Federation's relationship with the greater San Francisco community?

Lurie: Probably people with a little perspective will look back at my tenure here and say that Brian didn't do anything in the general community, and they are going to be right. I helped build facilities in which there are Jews and non-Jews, the Centers in South Peninsula and Marin, et cetera. But by and large, my total concentration has been on strengthening the Jewish community. My predecessor once removed, Treguboff, was very involved in the general community. He was active in United Way, in the foundation world. Phyllis Cook has been involved in the foundation world and the general community through her work more than I. I just haven't done it.

I decided at the very beginning of my tenure here that the Jews were terrific working on behalf of the non-Jews here. They just needed strengthening working for Jews. The leadership I was going to give, the time that I was going to give, was strictly on

the basis of Jews building a community for Jews both here and around the world. That would be the way it would be. I have done nothing in that larger community. I have some wonderful ideas about what to do but I never did it.

Glaser: That's it, Brian.

XXV FAMILY

[Interview 9: December 19, 1992] ##

Divorce and Impact on Sons Ari and Daniel

Glaser: Brian, our last interview was in August last year, and you wanted to talk about your family. Let's go back to your divorce and the impact this had on your older two boys.

Lurie: I'm not so sure what the impact is--

Glaser: First tell me their names.

Lurie: The two older boys are Ari and Daniel.

Glaser: And their ages?

Lurie: Ari is going to be twenty-one on February the second, so he's twenty now. And Daniel is going to be sixteen--he's fifteen now. He'll be sixteen on February the fourth.

Glaser: What are they doing?

Lurie: Ari is at Boston College. Daniel is at University High School in San Francisco. He was with us last year in Greenwich, Connecticut, and he came back this year to be in San Francisco with his mother.

Impact. I think the best of divorces for children are not very good. In many ways, the divorce was right for my ex-wife and for me. I think, I know, that I am and I believe that she is, much happier married now than we were to each other. So that obviously is a positive. The negative is what do you do to your children because they so much need the security and the stability

that a family that stays together can potentially offer--often doesn't but potentially can offer.

Daniel, the fifteen-year-old, on the surface appears to be almost untouched by the divorce.

Glaser: How old were they at the time of the divorce?

Lurie: Daniel was two, and Ari was seven, or thereabouts, three and eight.

Glaser: I didn't realize it was that long ago.

Lurie: That was a long time ago. But I now have been married for ten years, and I think Mimi and Peter have been married eleven or twelve years. So it's a long time ago; Daniel was two or three and Ari was seven or eight, that's the period of it. So Daniel really didn't know very much, and he pretty much grew up with two parents that were separated. As a consequence, it appears not to have affected him at all.

He just went with me on the Prime Minister's Mission this past summer. I asked Ari to come first, and Ari did not want to go but Daniel did. So Daniel, the fifteen-year-old, went with me to Moscow and Israel. And the people on the trip were major donors from throughout America. To this day I see them all over the country and they ask, "How's Daniel? How's Daniel? Oh he's such a wonderful boy. Just tell him any time he comes through Milwaukee or Chicago et cetera, please have him stay with us. I have a daughter who is about his age. I want to fix him up." Daniel is that kind of boy. Sort of been blessed with a disposition that is always easy.

Ari on the other hand, Ari was at an age where I'm told it's a very difficult age to have parents go through a divorce. And he suffered. He also showed some of his most endearing qualities during that time. When I finally decided, I was living in the same house even though we were separated, which Mimi and I were doing. I finally announced to Ari, and to Mimi for that matter, that I was moving out.

Ari said to me, "Daddy, who's going to live with you?" I said, "Well, I'm going to live alone. You'll come back and forth, but I'm going to move into this apartment, and then your mother and I are going to exchange time in and out of this house. But I'm going to have my own apartment." He said, "Well, Daddy, take me with you." I said, "Ari what do you mean?" He said, "Well, Daddy, you can't shop for food and you can't cook and who's going

to scratch your back? I'll do those things for you. Take me with you."

Glaser: You must have broken down at that point.

Lurie: Oh, it was touching. It was really very touching. As I said, this happened twelve or thirteen years ago and I'll never forget it. I'll never forget the words and the face. So Ari is a very sweet, kind boy, but he was hurt by this. He's doing very well right now, and he's doing well in school. He's got great friends and he's fine. But he did get tainted by it.

Glaser: I saw your two sons at the luncheon at which the Feldman oral history was presented. They are very handsome lads.

Lurie: They're good boys. They're good sons. I've seen a lot of Ari. He picked me up at the airport when I flew in with the two younger ones yesterday. The nature of the craziness of my life is that he picks us up at the airport, and forty-five minutes later we're watching Daniel and his basketball game at University [High School]. Then I had to rush here to meet with our landscape architect. Our architect is redoing our house in Ross. It was so wonderful that Ari could pick us up at the airport. And then we're all going to Hawaii. We'll be separate, but yet together over there. All together that's good.

Now let me tell you the transition to Caroline. For me to date, because I was a public personality, a public figure in San Francisco, was a very difficult thing. It was not a matter of just the Federation. So I would be very quiet. And my children always came first. They spent every weekend with me, and I took them out at least two nights during the week. So I was with them constantly in the period between when I separated from Mimi until I got married to Caroline. A couple years' period. So we were constantly together and I would tell people, "If you want to invite me to a party, my kids come with me." And that was the way it was. If I were out on a date and I wanted to bring the woman with us, the kids would dictate which restaurant we would go to.

When I first took Caroline out I said to them, "Caroline wants to go to a good restaurant. So you're not having your choice tonight. You're just coming with us where we want to go." And we went to Le Beaujolais, which doesn't exist under present ownership. This is the Rouas family. Maurice owns Fleur de Lys and Claude has Auberge du Soleil. Interesting, quite wonderful family I befriended while I was here in San Francisco. Anyhow, that was the first restaurant we went to, and I remember the kids heard of this French restaurant and thought, "What are they doing?"

Marriage to Caroline Fromm

Lurie: This was my way of saying this was a special woman. And there ensued a very interesting dynamic, a tension that existed between the woman I was courting and was quickly in love with, and my two sons who'd had my undivided attention. And there was clear competition. When we finally got married, shortly after we got married we took a honeymoon, and it was the only honeymoon where the children went with us. I shouldn't say only. I'm sure other people have done such crazy things.

But we got married on February the twentieth of 1983. We got married in this house. [The home of Rabbi Lurie's in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Fromm.] We went on no honeymoon. We stayed overnight in a hotel in San Francisco. We were going to go someplace and my kids were basically acting out, so we decided not to go anywhere. And our honeymoon was taken that summer when I took a leave of absence or a sabbatical from the Federation. And for the first six weeks of that sabbatical we were in Israel. It was Caroline, it was Daniel, and it was Ari and myself. And this is where we really got to know each other in a very different way. And then after that six weeks in Israel, Caroline and I for another six weeks went and traveled all over the world. We went to Greece. We went to Egypt, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan.

Glaser: And were the kids with you?

Lurie: No, the kids went back to their mother. But it's the six weeks in Israel. And the reason I tell the story is that on the trip Ari, who was eleven at the time, and Caroline talked about how they had to share me and what they had to do in order to make that sharing possible. This was a very meaningful and important conversation. Now, it wasn't easy because Ari would say things to me like, "Dad, look, I know that you really had to get remarried, but why didn't you wait until we grew up and went to college?"

This is part of it. Today, Ari is crazy about Caroline. And one of his great dreads is that something would happen to our relationship. That he would lose Caroline and lose the stability of this wonderful home. So, it's come full circle now as far as this relationship. He'll call up and talk to her about women, and about school, about whatever, because she really is a wonderful friend to him and gives him sound advice.

Glaser: Had she been married before?

Lurie: She had been married for several years before to a fellow that I think she'd met at Berkeley. His name is Warren Green, and they still are friendly to this day. He lives over in Sausalito--a very fine, bright human being. Well, they got married early and I think they got divorced two and a half years later. They had no children. I had met her something like ten years after she was divorced. It was really as if she had never been married because of not having children and it was so long ago. She was a highly-sought-after woman. She had more boyfriends than any woman I've ever gone out with.

Glaser: She had a career.

Lurie: She is a psychologist. So she had a full patient load, I think, of thirty-five clients that she was seeing. In addition to that she was teaching at Children's Hospital in their psychiatric program. Working hard.

Glaser: Did she have any time for doing things in the community?

Lurie: No. No, I mean there was really basically her work, her social life, and her family. And that's all the time she had for anything.

Glaser: So for each of you to take that much time for traveling could not have been easy. You had, what was it, twelve weeks all together?

Lurie: Right. It was a very difficult thing to extricate herself from her patients. She had to assign them all over the place. There were some that just never quite fit with anyone else but Caroline. She's a wonderful therapist.

For me it wasn't as hard. I mean I had an office, and I had been there for so long so I had a very high-quality staff, and I just made assignments. While I was in Israel, I was in constant contact with the office. Actually it was in Israel at that time that I made a decision to write that paper about "The Crossroads to Responsibility." That's when it really crystallized, that I knew we had to take this risk. It wasn't hard for me. It was much harder for her to clear the calendar.

Children, Alexander and Sonia

Glaser: When was the second set of children born? What are their names and ages?

Lurie: Well, let's see. We've been married almost ten years and the oldest is Alexander. He's eight. His birthday is August the fifteenth. I think that would be, let's figure this out. He was born in '84, August of '84, and we got married in February of '83. So about a year and a half afterwards.

Caroline was very anxious to have children. I was happy to go along with that. I thought it would be a good idea for both of us to have a child. And Alexander came. Alexander's a bit of a devil. He's very bright. His eyes, they just are bright. They burn with an intelligence and energy. When he's awake, he's awake. When he sleeps, he sleeps. He's not hyperactive, but it's a step down from that.

Glaser: You're suggesting intensity.

Lurie: Tremendous intensity. He has the same qualities of both of his parents put together. We both have a great deal of intensity, and he's got us squared, so he's very--but on the other hand when he concentrates on something, he really hones in on things. He's very curious. Doesn't know a word, he'll ask a thousand questions. He will do something unusual. What exactly he will do as a grown-up I don't know, but it will be unusual. He's a handful. We obviously both love him. And Caroline is a wonderful mother dealing with a very demanding and challenging child. Without any question, he is the hardest of my four children as far as managing. Conceivably he'll make the most outstanding contribution too because of his nature, and life produces all kinds of interesting twists and turns.

So he came and he was not restful from day one. And then we decided to have another child, which was the decision that I reluctantly agreed to. I mean we'd had three sons and to have a fourth son--well, I don't need a fourth son. Three is plenty. So three years later, because Sonia's five, born on July the tenth. She'll be six so if she was born three years after Alexander, she was born in '87.

It was unbelievable having her, because first of all I was convinced she was going to be a boy. And as I did in the first three, I was in the delivery room. Caroline had a Caesarean with Alexander and that was after twenty-two hours of labor. This was it. She was exhausted and it was time. But after twenty hours of labor with Sonia, the lady at Children's, the head nurse or whatever she's called, said, "Now this is going to hurt, but this is going to get the baby out." And the baby couldn't come out. They were thinking about Caesarean and Caroline said "No, I don't want another Caesarean." So the woman literally (I believe a



Caroline and Brian Lurie, 1988.

Filipino lady) jumped up in the air and [claps] landed on Caroline's stomach.

Glaser: That sounds terrible.

Lurie: And the impact pushed the baby out. This is really what happened. Oh, she was delighted. I mean this was the only way the baby could come out.

Glaser: Sounds medieval.

Lurie: It was but it worked. We learn from history, don't we? So this historically had worked, it worked again. So the baby comes out, and I look at this baby and I said, "What's wrong with him?" My exact words--"What's wrong with him." There was no penis. It never occurred to me I could have a daughter.

Glaser: [laughs] How funny.

Lurie: I was embarrassed. It was so funny to have this daughter to look at her vagina instead of a penis. I mean it was--"What do I do?" I was so used to that other plumbing and handling. So changing--it took me--I was awkward, and here I'm a great changer and a great cleaner of babies. I was the one who got up in the middle of the night and I did a lot of the things. Even though all were breast-fed, for that night feeding that you do with the bottle, I used to get up.

Glaser: But men love having daughters.

Lurie: Well, it's been unbelievable. Like, I'm a classic. I'm no different than anybody else. I mean she's got me so...

Glaser: You just melt, right?

Lurie: Oh, she just--I'm just crazy about her.

Glaser: Both your children have, to me, Russian sounding names.

Lurie: They're Caroline's choices, Alexander and Sonia. They are Russian. You could say Alexander is Greek, but...

Glaser: Well, yes.

Lurie: These were her favorite names and I liked them too. So it was easy.

Glaser: I want to ask you about your relationship with your in-laws.

Lurie: No. What I was going to suggest is I do want to talk a bit about how the two and two have become four.

Glaser: Good.

Lurie: And just briefly--on that new job, Daniel lived with us for the year. It was very important. He established a good relationship with Alexander, less so with Sonia. I mean, he's there. But his relationship with Alexander was very important--that Alexander know that he had a permanent big brother. Both the little ones idolized Ari. I mean, he's the big one. He couldn't be more perfect. I mean, when he came to the airport yesterday, they went "Ari, Ari" and they ran and they embraced him. Daniel was sort of the in-between, older but still competitive with my attention in a way that they don't like. It was a very important year. And I worked very hard to bring the four of them together.

In Hawaii now, we'll spend a great deal of time--Daniel will come stay with us for the rest of the week at the place we stay. We're on the same island, and Ari will come in and out and so we'll all be together. And you know that it's really important that those kids be together. And I've talked a great deal with the older boys about how important that relationship is, and how ultimately it is the most important relationship they can have besides having their own children, their own wife, et cetera. So that to me is terribly important. And I worked at it and I worked to have them together.

Role as Disciplinarian

Glaser: I wanted to ask you about disciplining. I think I've mentioned to you once before that Bob Friend had told me that you love children. What does this mean in regard to discipline? Can you discipline them or are you too soft-hearted?

Lurie: I'm probably not a good disciplinarian because I'm erratic. My nature is I tune out to a lot of things. I tune out both professionally and personally. I just sort of don't hear. I'm either absorbed in thoughts or I sort of distance myself from what's happening all around me. So to be a good disciplinarian you have to be right on top of it. And it has to be you say it once and that's it, otherwise the kids get all kinds of mixed messages. So I'm inconsistent. I guess I will punish them, but I let them do different things on different levels at different times. I'm not consistent. So I give myself low grades as a good disciplinarian.

Glaser: Do you leave most of that to your wife?

Lurie: Well, she's around. I mean, since in the last year and a half I've traveled about 50 percent of the time. So a lot more falls on her. When I'm around, I have to do it. And I do it but I'm not really good. But it's not because I don't want to discipline. It's because I don't pay enough attention to it. It's like anything else, if you want to be a good disciplinarian you have to really pay attention, which is probably one of my faults. If I would rate myself as a parent--the kids know I love them, and I think I have a wonderful relationship with all four of my children. But have I given them enough of my true attention? I don't think so.

Glaser: I think my question really went to the point of feeling such love for children, is it hard for you to bring yourself to discipline?

Lurie: No. No, I don't think it's the problem. I don't think I love children any more than a lot of other people. So I would not call that a unique characteristic in myself. It's like what you said: every father loves his daughter. And I love all three of my sons. I like to hold them in my arms, I like to smell them. Even my oldest one. But that's not unusual. I mean, hugging children and loving their smells, if you will. That's just more natural. I love my kids. I love them physically, not just intellectually.

But I'm not really a good teacher. And a good teacher has something to do with being a good parent. A good teacher can take somebody from A and move them through B, C, E, F. And you have to be very thorough. I go from A to Z. I jump. I'm a jumper in life. The nature of my career is that I have an idea that's way out there. And I don't explain it well. Oft times I don't explain it well; I have to go back again. And it's not any different with my kids. I'll go, I'll jump. I'll skip steps, as Caroline says. So as a consequence, I'm not as clear and I'm not as good a parent as someone who's a good teacher.

Glaser: You're saying you lack consistency then.

Lurie: I lack clarity. Consistency in discipline was the issue I brought up, but I'm also saying I lack certain clarity with my kids. My kids don't understand necessarily what I'm saying because I don't--maybe it's a quality of patience, maybe it's the way my mind works, whatever. If I'm forced to, I can go from A, B, C, D, I can explain the whole thing. But that's not the normal way my brain works.

Effect of Move to East Coast

Glaser: I see. Now, in your move to Connecticut, has your wife been able to pick up her career or is it still a matter of adjusting?

Lurie: She works for the Greenwich Family Therapy Center, or whatever it's called. I think that's the name of it. But it's not really terribly satisfactory. She has to work in the evenings, so she just works one evening, Wednesday evening. That hasn't really worked out. But she's not so anxious to pursue that right now.

Glaser: It must have been quite an adjustment for her.

Lurie: Oh, last year was awful. Every morning or evening she would say to me, I came to depend on it. She would say, "I don't think you know, you just have no idea how unhappy I am." This was every day. And it went on for months.

Now Greenwich is at once an awful and beautiful place. It physically is almost as beautiful as the Bay Area. I say almost. There you have beautiful countryside and you have magnificent homes, frankly I've never seen such beautiful homes. Just all over--it isn't just one neighborhood, it's the whole place! And a tremendous amount of land. There are much greater amounts of land there than here. The foliage and fauna, I mean it's beautiful, really beautiful. That's the nice thing about Greenwich. And you're away from New York, which is good too. You leave the pressure in New York. The bad thing is it's a community that basically is unfriendly. People are at a distance.

First of all, Caroline makes friends very easily if she wants to. The first year there, she really didn't want to. But in spite of herself she made a very good friend, Joan Mann. Joan and Bob Mann have become our close friends, and they're a wonderful couple. Joan, who served as Caroline's mentor in Greenwich, has done something I never could do or maybe never tried to do--this is the bad teacher part of me. She has brought Caroline closer to Judaism. Caroline now studies Talmud with our rabbi in Greenwich, Connecticut, Hillel Silverman.

Hillel is a very fine teacher, a very good man, who had a congregation in southern California in Los Angeles called Sinai. He had some personal difficulties and ended up moving to Greenwich, Connecticut. His wife is also (Bobbi is her name) a lovely, lovely person.

Anyhow, Joan got Caroline to pay attention to Judaism in a way that I had not. Because Joan and Bob go to these classes, now Caroline goes all the time. And I've started attending now. Because, I mean, if Caroline's going I'm going to go. And he's really a very funny teacher, so it's a pleasure to be there. So that's going on and the kids are going to Sunday school.

We feel very isolated in the area in spite of what I'm going to say now. Our friends are here and [Rabbi] Michael Barenbaum is a close friend of mine over in Marin and that's the congregation we went to. I went to Emanu-El also and that's where I was as a rabbi for three years. And our family is here, our friends, everybody is here. This is our home, as I've said before. So then at the High Holy Days we particularly miss being here.

But this past Yom Kippur we went to Hillel Silverman's service. He is a Conservative rabbi so the services are much longer than the Reform services. So Caroline and I basically spent twelve, thirteen hours in the synagogue Yom Kippur evening, Kol Nidre, and the next morning and afternoon. And it was very meaningful. We got probably more out of it than we've ever gotten. I can't remember a time when I've enjoyed being in shul as much as I did. I went at ten in the morning and I didn't leave until seven at night. Alexander didn't want to come back. He'd gone to a children's service during that time. But Sonia was with us at the end. She was with us the last three hours. So when we had the Nilah she was there. It was a very wonderful family experience.

So these precious moments have expanded. Caroline has these friends, which are also my friends. She loves New York City, and she can get in and out of New York. Whether it be seeing Matisse or seeing friends that she has in New York, there's much more of a life there for her now than there was for a period of a year and a half ago. And that's in spite of my really horrific travel schedule. I go to Israel about eight times a year. I'm on the West Coast six, seven times, primarily Los Angeles. And I'm around the country constantly. It's much worse traveling than I thought it was going to be, as far as occupying time. And she has faced it this year in a much better light, much better mood than last year.

Glaser: I wanted to ask you about your relationship with your in-laws.

Lurie: They're great in-laws. They're generous of spirit. They're easy for me. They are non-interfering people altogether. Very supportive. One of the nice qualities or feelings that I have towards them--I'm proud of both of them. They are both

outstanding human beings in their own right. I'm also proud of my wife. Obviously, you know, their product. And to have respect and pride for people you have intimate contact with is terribly important.

XXVI EXECUTIVE OF UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

Fundraising Goals Accomplished ##

Glaser: Let's talk about your career change. There were some things you had in mind that you wanted to accomplish. One of the things was that you were going to put together a major fundraising group. I think you called it a mega-gift group. Has that been accomplished?

Lurie: It's been accomplished.

Glaser: This was for givers of a million or more.

Lurie: People who gave--actually that's a million and over, but it's more. People that give closer to two million dollars or three or four or five or as high as twenty million dollars.

Glaser: Really?

Lurie: Yes. Annually. The group has been put together. It's not a group that I would want to list names, simply because of reasons of their own privacy. The two co-chairmen of the group are Charles Bronfman and Les Wexner. Both very Jewishly-committed, Jewishly-knowledgeable, terrific guys. And they're leading the group. The group has met half a dozen times. There is another meeting coming up this coming February. It's a group, it's happened, and it's way beyond fundraising. It's networking for them in their peer group, which is a very unusual stratosphere of donors and Jewish philanthropists.

Glaser: I'm surprised, given the recession, that this could be put together.

Lurie: The recession has not hit everyone. The nature of any economic problem is that there are people that are really hurt and some that are modestly hurt and others that get richer. I'm not saying this group has gotten richer. There are people in here whose net worth has been reduced, so they've been reduced from three billion to a billion and a half. It's a group that by and large has got tremendous financial stability and tremendous financial staying power so it's not going to hurt.

Redefining Role of United Jewish Appeal

High School Experience in Israel

Glaser: What other changes have you made in the UJA?

Lurie: My major philosophical attempt is to redefine what the UJA is itself. That it is not just known as a fundraising organization but is known as the living bridge. The living bridge between the Diaspora and Israel. That's my major pursuit. And to define all work that we do in light of this living bridge. If it doesn't facilitate the living bridge then we shouldn't be doing it. If it does, then we should. I'm trying to redefine what the UJA is in that way.

As an example, when I came I said if we're going to be a living bridge, we have to be a living bridge for all times, which means we have to pay attention to kids. And the issue of Jewish continuity becomes a very important one. And what can you do about it because we have basically an overseas mandate. And my answer to the executive committee of UJA was that we have to send high school kids to Israel.

Glaser: That's always been one of your pet projects.

Lurie: Always. But it was never an issue for UJA. Well, now UJA has taken it up as part of their charge together with the CRB Foundation, which is Charles R. Bronfman's foundation, and the UJA, Council of Jewish Federations, JESNA (Jewish Educational Service of North America), and JCCA, which is Jewish Community Center Association. We're all in this consortium together to basically make this high school-Israel experience for Diaspora youth a standard feature of growing up as a Jew; much like what I did here with the confirmation classes. We're going to do it nationally. So our first plan is to take the numbers from 7,000,

which is where they're at now nationally, to 50,000 on an annual basis. So it's a huge endeavor in many ways. But it's very exciting. So that's an example.

Now UJA has committed itself conceptually to put up seed money for scholarships in certain pilot communities to facilitate this. The UJA--as far as relationship with the Israel, the government of Israel, the leadership of Israel--has gone through tremendous metamorphoses. UJA is now a proactive organization. A lot has happened, and I feel very good about it. It has not been a waste of time.

Missions to Israel

Glaser: Have you increased the number of missions?

Lurie: We've increased the number of people going. I don't know about the number of missions. The year before I came, because of the war I have to say, it was down well below, right around 4,000. Then after the war there was a big swing up, which I was part of but I can't say I drove. [Child's voice in background.] It was around 7,000.

[tape interruption]

Lurie: It was around 7,200 in '91, we'll be about 8,000 in '92, and we're on our way to 10,000 in '93. That was my goal. I created a program called "Mission Ten Thousand." It was an attempt to up the numbers of people going to Israel, [children's voices in background] and to enrich the program so it wasn't just a fundraising experience but a Jewish experience. So the content is in the process of changing. We tried to have many more Jewish scholars and Jewish intellectuals involved in the program than what we've had heretofore. So it's in a process of transition right now.

My good friend Nechamia Degan, who I think is mentioned someplace in this oral history, is the former chief educational officer of the Israeli Army. Nechamia now is the head of our Israel programming desk, which means missions and Israel speakers. He's tremendous. So he's leading the charge there.

Glaser: I've just heard that there is a possibility that the cost of missions will no longer be tax-deductible.

Lurie: That's correct.

Glaser: What will that do to--

Lurie: I don't think anything. There'll be initial, I'm sure, shaking of heads, but...You know some people will pay a third more to go on the trip. And so you pay the third more. So, instead of paying \$1,000, you pay \$1,300. Instead of \$2,000, you pay \$2,600, \$2,700. I don't think it'll make much of a difference.

Glaser: Well, for some people it will, because there have always been some who have been subsidised by their federation.

Lurie: They can still be subsidized but they'll be taxed on the cost of the trip, what the value of the trip is. I don't think it will be a long-lasting problem.

Relationships with Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal

Glaser: I read in the Jewish Community Bulletin that there has been a combining of offices in Jerusalem of the UJA, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the United Israel Appeal.

Lurie: Correct.

Glaser: How has that worked out?

Lurie: So far it has worked out very well, and it will work out well because we have an outstanding director general, Menachim Revivi. He was hired jointly by the three organizations. And he reports directly to me because UJA has by far and away the largest operation in Israel. So it was an agreed upon piece that I would be his direct supervisor.

Glaser: Does this mean that there is also closer cooperation in this country, or has that always existed?

Lurie: No, it hasn't. Marty Kraar, who's head of CJF, and I speak every day--literally as much as a half an hour a day at least, on the phone if not in person. So there's a constant sharing back and forth. It's the closest cooperation the UJA and the CJF have ever had by far. We're not doing just this jointly. For instance, we do their printing in-house at UJA. They're doing some endowment development for us. So we're doing all kinds of reciprocal arrangements. Our Washington office is now housed with them. And so it will be. There are tremendous areas that we cooperate in.

Glaser: What about the relationship with United Israel Appeal?

Lurie: United Israel Appeal, there's always been a fairly close relationship. It's a much smaller organization with a much more defined role and it continues to be collegial. Close. Since this is not going to come out for awhile, I would say that the United Israel Appeal as a separate entity is highly questionable. Its duties could easily be done by a combination of CJF and UJA. And it probably would be more efficacious to be done that way. The historical reasons, really for protection of IRS reasons, are not valid today. It probably is an agency that its time has come and gone.

Glaser: That means you expect the federal government will not need to have this--

Lurie: No, you can have a separate shell in there, a separate entity in there called the UIA, but it would really be--we would run part of it, UJA, and the other part of it, probably CJF would run.

Glaser: I see.

Lurie: And they would still be able to approach Washington for funding. They are getting \$80 million for programs in Israel right now from the federal government for refugee resettlement. That could continue. But they have a budget of some \$3 million. I've just gone through a variety of processes. We have too many cooks in the kitchen. Everybody's well-intentioned and I'm not suggesting anybody is doing anything bad. And since I got there, the issue of turf has been a minor issue, not major.

But the structure has inhibited the kind of rapid movement that a modern, with-it national organization should have. There's just too much additional responsibility and authority. For instance, for us to help New York-UJA Federation get a \$15 million line of credit, it just took forever to do it. And it shouldn't have happened that way. To go into the detail of it, I don't even want to, but basically what I'm suggesting is that a systemic change is necessary. And again has nothing to do with people. It has to do with institutions.

Glaser: I think you left San Francisco expecting to deal with that, if I remember correctly.

Lurie: Yes. I went and I did deal with that. I said, "We're all in this thing together." So, I've been very clear about not wanting to take over and not wanting to get into somebody else's turf. I don't. But now as I exercise my fiduciary responsibilities, I see that we are inhibited in doing the job we should be doing by the

structure. And so there comes a point in time when you say this isn't right. You have to say we must change. For all I care, UIA can take over UJA, but we need one organization.

Exodus of European and Syrian Jewry

Glaser: I want to ask you about the impact on UJA and your work by what's happening in Europe, what's happening in Yugoslavia. The upsurge of anti-Semitism in Germany and things like that.

Lurie: It just makes Jews more vulnerable, obviously, in that part of the world, and it just underscores that Jews are on the move. A phenomenal number of Jews are getting out. Right now as we talk, do you know there are 2,650 Jews that have gotten out of Syria, living in Brooklyn? Now this has not been publicly reported, so that's why I can bring it up here because this won't appear for a long time. But we expect by February fifteenth all the Jews that want to leave Syria will be out.

Out of places like Sarajevo and Bosnia, there are also Jews that are coming out. There's the JDC [Joint Distribution Committee] rescue, I'm sure you read about it.

Glaser: Yes.

Lurie: Phenomenal things are happening. Jews are on the move and they're coming to Israel and they're relocating there. As I said, it underscores--it isn't just a matter of the former Soviet Union, it's other places as well. Which again states the clear and present need for a Jewish state. Someplace for Jews to go.

Glaser: Right. It also underscores the need for funds. You must have had to pay a lot to Syria.

Lurie: This \$15 million line of credit is to primarily pay for the cost of Syrian Jews settling in Brooklyn.

Glaser: But not only the resettlement. Didn't you have to pay ransom money to get them out of Syria?

Lurie: It's all part of the same.

Glaser: I would think so. Thank you, Brian, for this final interview.

Transcribed and Final Typed by Christopher DeRosa

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*Presented as a keynote address
August 24, 1981 in Jerusalem
International Conference of Jewish Communal Service
at the opening session of the
Community Organization Activity Workshops*

P R O J E C T R E N E W A L

A Tool for Building and Strengthening
The Links Between Israel And Diaspora

by

Rabbi Brian Lurie

Executive Director
Jewish Welfare Federation of San Francisco

In preparing for this task I have given some thought to why I was chosen to represent the Diaspora. The choice of Yehiel Admoni to represent Israel was most natural and appropriate. No individual has done more to reorganize Renewal and to make it produce necessary results. Admoni's extraordinary talents in administration and in understanding human motivation have encouraged Diaspora leadership just at the time when many were convinced that Renewal would never succeed.

I believe that I was chosen not just because they knew it's always easy to get Lurie to come to Jerusalem, but because the community I represent--San Francisco--was one of the first in the world to recognize the importance of Renewal. Some saw Renewal as just another fundraising gimmick; others, more sophisticated, viewed it as an attempt to move worldwide Diaspora campaigns off their four-year plateau and introduce a new dimension to raising campaign money; but we saw it as an historic opportunity to establish a new relationship between the Jews of the Diaspora and the Jews of Israel.

When Tel Hanan, a neighborhood within the community of Nesher, became our sister city, we in San Francisco began a new modality of giving and relating to the people of Israel.

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At the outset of Project Renewal, San Francisco leadership realized it was necessary to take specific steps to develop direct lines of communication between us and Tel Hanan. We did this in several ways.

First, we created a liaison position. Zvi Sobel, Professor of Sociology and Dean of Foreign Students at Haifa University, was hired by Federation in October 1978 as "our man in Tel Hanan." Sobel met informally with Tel Hanan residents and social workers and soon became a welcome participant at the steering committee meetings of Nesher. In fact, he and the Mayor of Nesher, Schmuel Reinisch, have become good friends. Through Sobel's writings and visits to San Francisco, we have been able to maintain a constant flow of communications between our two cities--an imperative in the face of the past gradualism of Project Renewal. (I was pleased to see that according to Dr. Daniel Elazar's article,* by February 1981, 12 other communities had hired their own representatives.)

Our communication lines have also been boosted by San Francisco's steady stream of visitors and Missions to Tel Hanan. For the second consecutive summer the Jewish youth of San Francisco (160 strong) have worked side by side with the youth of Tel Hanan. We have encouraged local San Francisco college students to participate in the Sherut L'Am or W.U.J.S. program so they might spend five months of service in Tel Hanan. We also established our Federation's own Project Renewal Committee, composed of members skilled both in urban planning and fundraising. The Committee's major goal is to work alongside Tel Hanan citizens and to offer advice about the community's problems and future.

All that I have reported about San Francisco and Tel Hanan could also be said of dozens of other communities, such as Ashkelon/England, Baltimore/Ir Ganim, New York Hatikva.

A program like Renewal--with its grand goals--also produces grand difficulties, complexities, sensitivities and minglings of success and failure. Because of the emotional climate surrounding Renewal, the events of the 1980 Jewish Agency Assembly should have surprised no one.

* "Project Renewal: Drawing Sweet From Bitter," *Jerusalem Letter: Viewpoints*, February 23, 1981.

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Project Renewal occupied center stage. Diaspora leaders, who had spent well over a year familiarizing themselves with their twin neighborhoods, came prepared to participate by articulating their observations and concerns. The overall progress of Renewal had been slow. It was apparent to everyone that although some improvement had been accomplished, in many communities the current pace was stagnant.

A deep concern was expressed about how to get Renewal to really work. This fiery subject was fueled by protests of citizens of the twinned neighborhoods. The Jerusalemites--led by Marciano, a Knesset member and Musrara resident--called for elevating the Project Renewal unit by making it a full-fledged department of the Agency. Men and women from Musrara stormed into the plenary session on the afternoon of our Project Renewal presentation (Tuesday) and returned again to the Thursday morning debate when various resolutions on Renewal were brought before the Assembly. The Musrara participation further heightened the already intense feelings of the Assembly members that something more needed to be done for Renewal.

In the Assembly's opening address (Tuesday morning), Nissan Gaon--chairman of the World Sephardic Federation, called for Renewal to receive full department status. His call was echoed by others and finally championed by Stephen Shalom, president of the UJA of Greater New York. Much resistance to this idea came from the Jewish Agency. What then followed was reminiscent of a floor fight at a political convention as Shalom and I tried to amend, or better said, to reinstate the Renewal resolution. Although the sense of Shalom's proposal was unanimously adopted by the Assembly, the motion itself failed because of a legal technicality.

Today, Diaspora and Israeli leadership fully understand the urgent responsibility to fulfill the promise of Project Renewal. As Akiva Lewinsky said, the credibility of the Agency is at stake. In some poverty areas, hope has been raised--as never before. But Raanan Weitz, head of the Rural Settlements Department, reported to us about

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other neighborhoods where hope has begun to fade. When that happens, frustration builds. And a time bomb is created within Israel.

The citizens of Project Renewal neighborhoods see a natural relationship to and share a kindred spirit with Diaspora partners. the seeds of this improved partnership were planted by the reconstitution of the JEwish Agency in 1970, an act that resulted in more participation by non-Zionists (fundraisers). Today, if Renewal is to succeed, the Diaspora community must go far beyond our present involvements and accept different and perhaps even greater demands.

By now it is clear that the Renewal neighborhoods desperately need community organizers. Where such talented individuals exist (as in Givat Olga and HaTikva), the future of Renewal appears bright. But Israel is not producing nearly enough of these needed workers. Samuel Lahis, former Director General of the Agency, admitted the necessity for outside help to enable Renewal to succeed.

It is not enough to point out the failures. We must mobilize the resources within our reach to motivate and sustain Renewal. It is my belief--which is shared by many others--that a Jewish Peace Corps, with a minimum of two years of service, be mobilized and sent to Israel to help the Renewal neighborhoods. And it is precisely from your own ranks that this essential manpower can and must emerge.

Is the so-called new relationship between the Diaspora and Israel sufficient as a foundation for the future? I think not.

Let us take a hard look at the problems. There was a time when the Diaspora raised a significant amount of money compared to the budget of the Israel government. Then, the Diaspora's assistance was crucial to help the State absorb the flood of 1.7 million immigrants. But now, the State of Israel has matured and is no longer overwhelmed by immigrants.

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This fact is acknowledged within the logic of the Horev Report, which states that the Agency and the government are engaged in the same endeavor (absorption) and that the resulting duplication and waste of effort should be eliminated. The Report recommends a solution--having only ONE department devoted to settling new citizens. (But even if the Jewish Agency were exclusively focused on absorption, there is yet another snag: the Agency does not receive from the Diaspora enough funding to carry out its present charge.)

The recitation of these facts should not depress us, but rather inspire our ingenuity for in challenge we find continuity and creative survival. We are on the threshold of a monumental change, an historical reckoning. Does it not behoove us to seek an imaginative and fresh direction for the Agency?

Rabbi Irving Greenberg has expounded on the concept of three Jewish eras in history. The first came to a decisive end with the destruction of the Second Temple in 67 c.e. The major components of this first era revolved around the land, Temple worship and a priestly cult--clannish, pagan and primitive in nature. The second age (which lasted until the 19th century) revolved around the rabbis, Jewish law, Jewish holidays (focusing on a more spiritual nature) and certain metaphysical and philosophical tenets about afterlife.

The third era began with the Enlightenment and Emancipation of the 19th century. But the turning point...the moment of definition and clarification...waited until the Holocaust and the Rebirth. In these awesome events we begin to see the matrix and the outline of the era in which we live---an age that revolves around peoplehood/community, Israel and the development of Diaspora/Israel relations.

The leadership of the Jewish people has changed, historically, from the priest to the rabbi to the people. Ordinary Jewish men and women who are building a strong Diaspora and a strong Israel; people who understand that the relationship between Jews in the Israel homeland and Jews in the Diaspora is the most vital element of their mutual and creative survival.

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A NEW KIND OF JEWISH AGENCY

To strengthen Diaspora/Israel relations, it is necessary to firmly establish an international Jewish institution. Such an institution presently exists--the Jewish Agency. It is my opinion that this Agency should redefine itself in philosophic, structural and programmatic terms and become a voluntarily-based world Jewish parliament which would exist to strengthen and enliven Diaspora/Israel relations.

We must recognize that, until now, the Agency has existed primarily to serve the Zionist ideal of building up the land and the people. My recommendation--a radical departure from the Agency's former direction--will require the government of Israel to free the Agency from Israeli political constraints. Only then, with a new independence, can the Agency move forward.

The structure and philosophy of the New Agency are fairly self-evident. But what are the various kinds of programmatic elements this redirected Agency will undertake? One of the most urgent involves the potential of young Jewish adults. Most Israeli universities of higher learning have outstanding programs for foreign students, the vast majority of whom are Jewish. These young Jewish men and women could become crucial bridges in reinforcing Diaspora/Israel relations. Thus, they should become natural and valuable recipients for Agency funding precisely because the number of students in university programs has been drastically reduced, due to lack of scholarships. (Present costs for each student are \$2000 plus an additional \$1000 for the University).

Another of the New Agency's programmatic targets would be funding for Nohar Vehehalutz's departmental program, from which a substantial number of Diaspora youth go to Israel. The average cost of these sessions (three to six weeks long) is \$2000. Because these programs are so essential for shaping future leadership, the current trend of decline is alarming. Judy Siegel writes (Jerusalem Post, July 13, 1981) that

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the number of Diaspora youth , aged 16-24, ho arrive for Summer Projects has steadily dropped (from 13,000 in 1977 to 6000 in 1981). Avraham Katz, Chairman of the Nohar Vehehalutz department, blames this plummeting figure primarily on the fact that the World Zionist Organization decided, more than a year ago, to stop subsidizing participants.

The New Agency would also concentrate programs on either the Diaspora or on Israel. An example in Israel is Project Renewal, which energizes the Diaspora/Israel partnership and also builds the Land of Israel.

But the New Agency's center of activity would not be found only in Israel. To strengthen Jewry, you must have Jews. Thus, the responsibility of the Agency also includes the rescue and movement of Jews from widespread areas of distress to new lives in Israel and other free lands. (However, once these Jews are relocated, they become the responsibility of their host society).

For the Diaspora, the New Jewish Agency might want to fund a major educational project to help stem the tide of assimilation and to help enrich Jewish lives. One example of such a program is the Jerusalem Fellowship (funded by Bank Leumi) which will commence in 1982-83. Here, ten promising young Jewish educators from Diaspora countries will receive three years of intensive, 'tailor-made' programming. Hopefully, during this time they will become top educators and will return to their homes (for at least five years) and will share their knowledge.

Thus, the New Jewish Agency would have a world-wide job with one fundamental question as its overriding criterion or litmus test: Does each Agency program strengthen Diaspora/Israel relations?

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The issues symbolized by Project Renewal should, I believe, be perceived as a major cause for the Agency's present self-study. Because of Project Renewal, Diaspora leadership has found an opportunity to become real partners in the Agency process. This Diaspora/Israel partnership will inevitably alter the Agency's basic structure and agenda.

Will the Agency take the direction that this paper suggests? I believe so.

I believe so because we need one another; because only with strong relationships--only with bridges built of human hearts and hands can we survive. I believe so because without a revitalized relationship the Diaspora will atrophy and Israel will become an isolated and embittered country--cheated of an historical destiny that insists it be more than "just another nation-state."

I believe so because I have two sons, aged nine and four. I want them to love this land and our people as much as I do.

Do you want any less for your sons and daughters?

A CROSSROAD TO RESPONSIBILITY

In 1978, Federations began to institute changes that have altered and will continue to alter profoundly the way Federations view their mission. This change can be directly attributed to Project Renewal.

Project Renewal was created by the Jewish Agency to respond to changing needs and changing times. The Agency helped absorb 1,500,000 Jews in Israel through its network of services---a record feat in one of the brightest stories of man helping his fellow man. But in the ensuing years, Israelis and Diaspora Jews needed a new, strong, tangible relationship. Project Renewal has succeeded in creating a direct bond between Israelis and Jews in the Diaspora whereby each feels they have a stake in the process. Thus, Renewal is a breakthrough that carries Federations to a new level of Diaspora-Israel interrelationship.

Many Federations now feel we are at another crossroad. They are suggesting that Federations look beyond Project Renewal when we attempt to address the many needs of Israel.

Therefore, it is proposed that Federations take steps to involve themselves more directly in the affairs of the Agency and the people of Israel. The goals are two-fold: first and foremost, to strengthen our relationship with the people of Israel; secondly, to endeavor, if possible, to utilize more effectively our dollars which are allocated overseas by establishing a more broadbased reporting system that would increase accountability. This may well lead to a salutary effect on Federation campaign efforts on behalf of Israel.

Toward these ends, Federations should appoint overseas committees composed of seasoned leadership. These committees should meet to establish guidelines as to how to evaluate and to interact with the Jewish Agency. It will be necessary for these committees to spend four or five days per year in Israel so that they will become better acquainted with the work of the Jewish Agency.

The time would be utilized in two ways, first, the experts of the various departments of the Jewish Agency, i.e., rural settlements, youth aliyah, immigration and absorption, would discuss their budgets and the status of their work; second, these meetings would be augmented by on site field trips to evaluate key Agency programs.

Federations feel a direct relationship and involvement with the many millions of dollars they presently allocate annually to Project Renewal. This new extension of the Project Renewal process will relate to the 300 million dollars we currently give to the Jewish Agency through our annual allocation to the United Jewish Appeal. Through Project Renewal, we have been linked more closely to Israelis. Realistically, this additional process will take many more years before it will evolve as far as our present Project Renewal relationship. But, through this new direct link with Israel, we will be binding ourselves to her with fresh knowledge, understanding and commitment. This is surely the way of approaching the Diaspora-Israel relationship in the 1980's and beyond.

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Toward these ends, we have established an Overseas Committee composed of experienced Federation leadership. This committee has met to establish guidelines as to how to evaluate and to interact with the Jewish Agency. The members of the committee have recently returned from a six-day trip to Israel which was undertaken to evaluate the work of the Agency. The Overseas Committee met with managers of various departments of the Agency, i.e., rural settlements, youth aliyah, immigration and absorption. They studied the budgets and the status of the work of the various departments and they made on site field trips to evaluate key Agency programs (See enclosed itinerary).

Upon the return of the Overseas Committee, the members submitted recommendations to the full membership of the Overseas Committee. These recommendations were unanimously approved and, in turn, after extensive discussion

the following recommendations were adopted by both Overseas and Executive Committees:

1. In order to further strengthen our relationship with the people of Israel, the committee recommends the opening of an interim San Francisco office in Jerusalem, the total cost of the office not to exceed \$35,000 per year. The following three recommendations are being forwarded to the Federation Board of Directors but no action is being requested until meetings with appropriate national and international leaders take place during the summer months. The Executive Committee wishes to seek out the advice of national and international leadership before requesting formal action on the following three recommendations:

2. Up to 5% of the 1984 overseas allocation (\$350,000) be set aside for specific projects in Israel;
3. We will make an effort to meet with leaders of UJA, UIA, CJF and the Diaspora leadership of the Jewish Agency to discuss the over-politicization, need for greater accountability and general funding pattern of the Jewish Agency.
4. Our Federation will reach out to coordinate a coalition with other major city Federations to accomplish the aforementioned objectives.

These recommendations foster a dynamic partnership between our communities and the people of Israel. Through these additional links with Israel, we will be binding ourselves to her with fresh knowledge, understanding and commitment. We will have the opportunity of drawing new people into our ever-expanding process. This is surely the way of approaching the Diaspora-Israel relationship in the 1980's and beyond.

1986 Overseas Project Guidelines

1. Fund three - no more than five - projects where a break-through or major impact could be achieved by the project.
2. At the present time the recommendation is to fund seed projects (as opposed to "emergency requests" or funds for operating costs). Funding may be in the form of matching funds or a challenge grant. In general, priority will be given to projects in which we are a major funder.
3. No specific time limitations will be imposed on grants, but all grants will be evaluated annually. A grant in 1986 is no guarantee of a grant in a subsequent year.
4. No funds will be granted in 1986 for capital buildings.
5. Projects should reflect both the San Francisco Federation's special interests in Israel, as well as to the extent possible, the participation and involvement of individual Federation members in the project.
6. In general, overseas project grants will be outside the areas generally funded by the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization, and the government of Israel.
7. Grants should be made to projects outside San Francisco's Project Renewal cities unless a meritorious grant proposal coincidentally touches our Project Renewal areas.
8. Projects should be evaluated after they are underway six months and upon completion of the project. Grant proposals should specify an evaluation plan, including the criteria for evaluation, built into the project at the outset.
9. 1986 grant areas should be: Strengthening Democracy in Israel; Strengthening Religious Pluralism in Israel; Israel/Diaspora Relations; Economic Projects will be investigated but probably not funded in 1986.
 - a. An open meeting of the Overseas Committee with the Executive Committee and board members will act on these recommendations.
10. The Jewish Agency will be asked to channel the money for the overseas grants. They will be asked to reply in a timely fashion.

If the Agency refuses, grants will be funded through other appropriate non-profit entities.

COMMENTARY

Jewish Agency reforms a priority for S.F. federation

Over the almost 40 years of Israel's existence, Jews in the diaspora have pledged their support and faith in the future of the Jewish state through philanthropy, *tzedakah*, the voluntary giving of funds. The Jewish Agency in Israel has been the principal allocation institution to which these funds flow.

In recent years, dissatisfaction has grown over the way in which funds have been allocated, and the limited voice diaspora Jews have had in determining just how and where the money they raised actually was spent.

The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (JCF) has had an active role in helping to spark operational and funding reforms in the Jewish Agency. In 1986, we allocated \$100,000 to directly fund programs in Israel. An advisory body, an *amula*, made up of Israeli volunteers, was set up to help determine exactly which programs the money would fund.

We also opened an office in Jerusalem to reinforce our interest and participation in making positive changes in the Jewish Agency. This kind of direct representation and pressure helped lead to the structural and operational reforms within the Jewish Agency that are now beginning to take hold. The Jewish Agency's Board of Governors also has responded with numerous reforms dealing with the structure and assets of the Agency.

The information on the funding of Orthodox programs in Israel, outlined by Charles Hoffman in last week's *Jewish Bulletin*, is one of the many issues our federation has been reviewing. It's yet another reason why we have been working



rabbi
brian l. lurie



laurence
myers

GUEST COLUMN

so hard to reform the Jewish Agency.

We strongly believe that the Agency must be depoliticized. Therefore, we are working to ensure that party politics and political coalition-building do not continue to find their way into the Jewish Agency.

As long as the Labor Party and the Likud are the two major players in the Agency structure, they will continue to try and court the various religious parties (such as the Shas and Agudat Yisrael parties) for their votes. This means special allocations to right-wing and other ultra-Orthodox institutions in Israel. If they wish to do that in the Knesset, it is their right as an independent governing body of the state of Israel. But it should not be the place of the Jewish Agency to make such allocations.

We also have endeavored to point the Agency in new directions of funding, such as strengthening Israel-diaspora relations and Jewish pluralism, and strengthening democracy in Israel. All of these areas legitimize points of view that are not

always consistent with right-wing Orthodoxy.

These positions should not in any way be interpreted as an attack on Orthodox Jews. We are committed in this federation and around the world to Orthodox institutions and around the world to Orthodox institutions strengthen all of Jewry and do not separate Jew from Jew.

Our federation leadership will continue to work with Natan Del Kaplan, the Jewish Agency's new chairman of the Board of Governors, and Norman Lipoff, chairman of the Allotment Committee, to secure funding for institutions that are constructive for all Israelis and all Jews. We also will continue to support positive reforms to ensure that the dollars we are spent on programs that are most beneficial and most gently needed, keeping politics out of it.

Rabbi Brian Lurie is executive director and Laurence Myers is president of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

MINUTESPage Three

2. It was recommended that a joint board meeting of the Amuta and the Overseas Committee members take place in Israel to discuss pending grants and substantive issues.

III. Jewish Agency Board of Governors' Meeting Report

- A. Bill Lowenberg responded to questions on the recent Jewish Agency Board of Governors' meeting.

IV. The Overseas Committee's Future Posture

- A. Ron Kaufman asked the members of the committee to express their views on the future policy of the Overseas Committee.
- B. A letter from UJA chief executive, Stanley Horwitz, was circulated. It encouraged earmarking funds for projects in Israel through UJA to the Creative & Innovative Fund.
 1. The Creative & Innovative Fund was discussed in regard to its readiness to begin funding.
- C. The new personal connection between Israelis and San Francisco's Jews through the overseas grant process was characterized as very positive.
- D. Brian Lurie discussed the possibility of a pilot project to allow 150 donors to earmark new funds for special projects local, national, and overseas, that have been validated by the Federation. A paper written by Jon Fischel, director of the Montreal Federation, will be circulated (attached).
 1. It was suggested that a plan be proposed that a formula be devised for the amounts allocated to the Creative & Innovative Fund. San Francisco would be allowed to designate a percentage granted to the total fund in proportion to the amount San Francisco contributed to the total in the fund. A shopping list of projects could be provided to avoid "fractionalizing" or disrupting federated giving.
- E. We are no longer in an adversarial position in dealing with a Jewish Agency structure that now appears willing to change priorities and procedures to meet current needs; however, the opportunity and need to leverage change continues to exist.
- F. After extensive discussion, it was moved, seconded, and passed to recommend a \$100,000 reserve fund for special overseas projects in 1988 and to continue the allocation process with the Amuta. Bill Lowenberg abstained.

ACTION

JCF to channel \$100,000 directly to Israel

By WINSTON PICKETT
Of the Bulletin Staff

In a move designed to personalize the relationship between U.S. and Israeli Jews, the Jewish Community Federation in San Francisco has decided to channel \$100,000 "directly to projects in Israel," independent of its regular allocation of campaign funds through the Jewish Agency.

By appropriating the money directly, the JCF, working with its Israeli counterparts,

can selectively choose what projects it wants to aid, according to Rabbi Brian Lurie, executive director of the JCF.

The \$100,000 funding, in the form of a one-year renewable grant, was approved by the JCF board in September and is scheduled for final board action in December, Lurie reported.

He explained that the bulk of the funds will be directed in three major areas: democracy in Israel, including Arab-Jewish relations; Israel-diaspora relations; and projects to en-

courage religious pluralism in Israel.

"For many Americans, these are burning issues and areas that are of critical importance to the future of the state of Israel," Lurie said. "They are also areas in which Israelis have repeatedly asked us to become involved."

Lurie announced the grant at a recent plenary session of the Third World Assembly of Young Jewish Leadership held in Tiberias, Israel. The 44-year-old JCF director was a panelist — along with Shimon Ravid, director

general of the Jewish Agency; Ted Young, chairman of the UJA Young Leadership Cabinet; and Iddo Dissentshik, editor of the *Ma'ariv* newspaper — in a discussion on *The Layman and the Jewish Establishment*.

Recommendations as to how the money is to be spent will be made by board members of Amuta, an Israel-based board of seven lay leaders chaired by Avraham Infeld and staffed by Shlomit Laquer, director of the federation's Israel office in Jerusalem. Amuta is

(See JCF, Page 25)

JCF to channel \$100,000 directly to Israeli projects

(Continued from Page 1)

the Israel counterpart to the federation's overseas committee, which put forward the \$100,000 proposal.

According to Ron Kaufman, vice chairman of JCF's overseas committee and immediate past president of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, the main function of Amuta is to oversee the federation's Jerusalem office and to implement a host of programs.

Those programs, he said, include San Francisco missions, providing services such as networking and newsletters for Northern California olim (immigrants), and helping coordinate projects for San Francisco's Project Renewal cities, Tel Hanan and Kiryat Shmona.

Most importantly, he added, Amuta "serves as a sounding board of prominent Israelis in the private sector, and forms the core of a volunteer group in Israel that can interface with American federation leadership."

Although Amuta now is composed of seven lay leaders, including Yehiel Admoni, past director general of rural settlements and Project Renewal for the Jewish Agency, one of the first changes to be made is the expansion of the group to 15, Kaufman said.

According to JCF President Laurence Myers, some national Jewish leaders may see the federation's move as a radical departure from convention. Normally, he noted, money collected for Israel through United Jewish Appeal campaigns in the United States is distributed to various recipients by the Jewish Agency.



Ron Kaufman
lie-in with Amuta

Brian Lurie
personalizing ties

Laurence Myers
not a departure

"This isn't a departure, it's an experiment," he emphasized.

"When you consider that this is \$100,000, compared to the \$8.5 million from our campaign" — which will be distributed through the Jewish Agency for projects in Israel such as *aliyah* (permanent immigration to Israel), Project Renewal, youth aliyah, Israel's seven universities, and kibbutzim and moshavim (cooperative farms) — "this hardly can be considered a threat," he said.

Added Myers: "Naturally, the specific allocations stemming from the \$100,000 appropriation will receive a very thorough process through the committees in Israel, as well as the federation's overseas subcommittee, the overseas committee itself, the executive committee

tee, and, finally, our board of directors."

Nevertheless, some sources may consider the move to imply a criticism of the Jewish Agency's allocation process. When San Francisco opened its own office in Israel two years ago — the first city to do so in the country — that move also was greeted with a cool reception.

Said Myers, "Even if the agency were perfect, we would still initiate this program because this is a way of involving more people from the Bay Area in Israel-diaspora relations and expanding the direction of our partnership."

"We know from experience that the more people you bring into a project, the more they become involved on a personal level, resulting in a more productive relationship

ship between Americans and Israelis."

According to Lurie, the decision to allocate \$100,000 directly to Israel follows several years of increased ties between Bay Area Jews through programs such as Project Renewal, the exchange of *shlichim* (emissaries), and *Otzma*, a kind of Jewish Youth service corps.

"It's a growing trend," he added, noting that big city federations from Los Angeles to Montreal also have initiated joint American-Israeli programs such as *Otzma* on an ever-increasing basis. "What the federation's initiative does — its Israel office, together with the lay leadership component — is make sure this growing relationship can be a coordinated one as well," he

added.

It's also an alternative that Israelis themselves have encouraged Lurie maintained. "They need our input and are asking us to work closely with them to shape the moral fabric of Israel's future. They know issues like religious pluralism in Israel and Jewish-Arab relations are crucial for us, and that we need a vehicle for our concerns," he said.

When asked what would happen if other federations chose to follow San Francisco's lead and begin funding projects of their own, Lurie said he would hope that the UJF and Council of Jewish Federation would coordinate the efforts on a national basis.

But whatever the outcome, Lurie said he thinks the allocation came at a critical time, following a year of religious and social tension in Israel that has left many Americans wondering how Israel can reconcile the demands of democracy with those of a distinctly Jewish state. "What this means," he said, "is that we don't have to feel we can't get involved. We can, and we must, contribute to the burning issues that ultimately affect us all as Jews."

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY FEDERATION

DRAFT OF PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
SAN FRANCISCO FEDERATION OVERSEAS COMMITTEE/ISRAEL AMUTA
FOR 1989-90

A series of meetings were held in Jerusalem on June 22, 1989, attended by members of the Overseas Committee, the Project Renewal Committee and the Israel Amuta connected to the San Francisco Community Federation.

The ongoing unique relationship between San Francisco and the Amuta in Israel was the focus of the conference. Priority issues were decided which will serve as a mutual guide to the future beneficial relations between San Francisco and the Amuta:

Dialogue

Close communication and programs comprise the most important element of the special relationship between San Francisco and the Amuta. Specific emphasis was placed on joint selection of major issues of importance to Israel-Diaspora relations including early warnings on matters that can affect this relationship (such as "Who is a Jew", human rights, etc.).

San Francisco is interested in communicating to other Jewish Federations in the U.S. the value of the Amuta partnership model in dealing with major issues and matters of specific interest to a respective Federation.

1. Jewish Agency

The San Francisco Federation will continue to scrutinize the ongoing Jewish Agency agenda with the aim of speaking out on those issues that are of joint concern to San Francisco and the Amuta. It is essential to advocate what we consider to be the priorities on the Jewish Agency agenda. The Jewish Agency should continue and accelerate the process towards depolitization of the Jewish Agency, i.e. the separation of the Jewish Agency from the World Zionist Organization, and address the issues of education, economic development in Israel, the absorption of Soviet Jewry.

.../2

(A) Education

In accordance with the Jewish Agency's new emphasis on education in Israel, it is proposed that educational projects with potential for high impact and high visibility be developed primarily for, but not limited to, the Upper Galil region.

(B) Economic Development

It is critically important that we make every effort to stimulate the economy of the Upper Galil region as part of our continuing involvement in Project Renewal Phase II.

Our economic development strategy should include, but need not be limited to:

- * Technical vocational training and management advice to businesses and entrepreneurs.
- * Financial assistance under conditions that foster good business practice, growth, and independence.
- * San Francisco will seek ways to encourage the establishment of markets for Israeli exports.

(C) Soviet Jewry

In addition to increasing the number of Soviet Jews coming to Israel through an improved absorption process executed through the Jewish Agency and the government, programs shall be developed for Jewish education and positive presentations on Israel for Soviet Jews in the U.S.S.R. and on tourist visits to Israel.

2. Jewish and Arab Co-Existence in Israel

We will continue to support effective programs that foster and encourage mutual respect.

TOWARD A JEWISH SERVICE CORPS

This may be the time of relating, of bridging, of establishing a more meaningful dialogue between the Diaspora and Israeli Jews. We have Caesarea, Hertzelia, Sdom. Much of the conversation revolves around structural reform, and to this we say it's about time and good luck. But in the midst of this structural reform, we should be cognizant that the goal of such reform is better programs which lead to substantive changes.

There surfaced at the Sdom Conference an idea, a program that, if effectuated to its fullest degree, could materially alter the course of Diaspora/Israeli relations. The idea/program is the establishment of a Jewish Service Corps centered in Israel. This Jewish Service Corps would mobilize all world diaspora youth during their college years. All such youth would spend one year of volunteer service for the Jewish people.

This service could take many forms. For example, all members of the Jewish Service Corps would begin with a three-month ulpan and orientation program. After these initial three months, they could be sent to Project Renewal and development towns. Others who are skilled in other languages, Spanish for example, could be sent to Central or South America for nine months to aid in programs of Jewish education and Jewish cultural enrichment.

It is obvious that an older age would allow the youth to have greater skills so that they might serve the Jewish people worldwide with greater ability. But, if we wait beyond their college years, the chance for universal acceptance of a year of service to the Jewish people will be significantly diminished.

Thus, thousands of young Jewish men and women will spend three months learning Hebrew and be charged with their particular responsibility and then fan out over the length and breadth of Israel and beyond to every corner of the free countries of the world where Jews desperately need the connection with

other Jews to survive and flourish.

This is no dream. It is within the power of our Jewish people to initiate such a program. As Herzl said, "If we will it, it is no dream!"

C O N F E D E R A T I O N

Federations have become the central address of the Jewish Community. They serve as a centralizing agency for fund-raising, planning and allocating; community development and community cohesiveness. Autonomous Federations come together under the umbrella of the Council of Jewish Federations. This is a voluntary association which aids local Federations by providing services and which speaks for all Federations on national Jewish issues.

This working paper posits the proposition that another structure be added between the national organization, Council of Jewish Federations, and the local autonomous Federations. We will call this new structure Confederation. This would be comprised of a number of adjacent Federations, which would have at its center a major, urban Federation.

The key to the success of Federations has been their autonomy and independence. Thus in Confederation, each Federation will enjoy full freedom of action, as always. This will be a voluntary union of contiguous Federations, joined in Confederation for the benefits members will be able to realize in such an association.

What is to be gained ultimately by Confederation?

1. Regional planning - by Federations; as Jews spread from central core areas to suburban and finally to exurban areas, there is a blurring of Federation borders. Jewish services in these gray areas are few, and the desire by Jews in these areas to affiliate is often marginal. Thus a common plan of action to involve and provide service to these unaffiliated Jews should be undertaken. Also, special planning would be helpful to contiguous Federations in the development of new major facilities such as Museums, Centers, Homes for the Aged, Camps and even Synagogues.

A Confederation would be mutually beneficial to its member Federations in the areas of fund-raising, and broad-based community services such as newspapers, community relations, vocational services, and bureaus of Jewish education. In addition, joint purchasing, one computer center with many terminals, and other such benefits could be cost effective for the member Federations of the Confederation.

CONFEDERATION

Page Two

What type of structure would this Confederation have?

1. First, each local Federation would maintain its own Board of Directors and committee structure. The Confederation would have a Board of Directors made up of representatives from each member Federation. Each Federation will appoint five lay members as well as one professional to the Board. This Confederation Board would meet every other month, and be jointly staffed by the Executives of the various Federations. An Executive Committee, made up of one representative from each Federation, would meet regularly and conduct Confederation business on a continuing basis. None of the Confederation's actions would be binding upon any member Federation.

The Agenda of the Confederation Board will be made up by the Executive Committee, with the impetus for Agenda items coming from member Federations, and from the Confederation Board itself.

The Confederation would have no budgetary concerns, as any funds necessary for carrying out its mandate would come from member Federations' discrete decision-making process.

Confederation is a new form of Jewish linkage that will involve and serve Jews in the 80's. Confederation, without question, can maximize the efforts and voices of individual Jewish communities in a region without infringing upon their basic independence. Thus, this new structure is yet another step in enhancing our essential purpose, that of serving the Jewish community.

Brian's swan song: New York, New York



EXAMINER/CRAIG LEE

Brian Lurie likes the fact that people find him unpredictable. He calls New York an "irresistible" opportunity.

Controversial rabbi leaves to take on new challenge

By Cynthia Robins
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

RABBI BRIAN LURIE, the controversial outgoing head of the San Francisco United Jewish Appeal, is leaving for a new job as chief operating officer of the national United Jewish Appeal in New York the same way he came in: on his own terms.

Lurie's new position, akin to becoming CEO of a Fortune 500 company, places him at the head of more than 200 local Jewish federations, which collected a total of \$1.1 billion in 1990, including \$765 million for its regular campaign and \$420 million for Operation Exodus, the special fund designated for rescue and resettlement of Soviet and Ethiopian Jewry.

Next to the Mormons, Jewish philanthropies raise more money per capita than any other religious denomination.

"It is the (humanitarian) tradition of *tsedakah*, that charity is a

matter of righteousness," explains Phyllis Cook, associate executive director of the Bay Area Jewish Community Federation, one of the 200 local federations over which Lurie will preside.

Facing Lurie and the United Jewish Appeal — the chief American fund-raising arm sending huge amounts of money to the state of Israel — will be the intake and resettlement of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews, not to mention the shifting sands of U.S. policy on economic aid to Israel.

After 17½ years with the Bay Area's Jewish organizations, Lurie, 49, leaves a mixed legacy.

In 1973, the year before he arrived, the federation's annual fund-raising campaign totaled \$6.8 million.

This year, the West Bay Jewish Community Federation — which extends from Los Altos through Sonoma — is expected to raise nearly \$18.2 million.

A second campaign is expected to collect \$23 million for Project Exodus.

(The situation of Soviet Jews in Israel has recently become the fo-

[See LURIE, C-4]

◆ LURIE from C-1

**Brian's swan song:
New York**

cus of international attention because of President Bush's decision to delay aid to Israel aimed at lessening the adverse economic impact of Soviet Jewish immigration.

"What is clear is that nobody that is in the administration, in Congress, in Israel — *nobody* wants a confrontation," Lurie said in a telephone interview from his New York office on Friday. "Everyone wants an amelioration, with the understanding that the president's request (for a 120-day) delay is understandable. I don't think anybody is fighting that for a moment. On the other hand, there is a desperate need for this money (which is actually) a loan guarantee that is not going to cost our taxpayers anything.")

Under Lurie's direction, the Jewish Community Federation Endowment Fund — reserve monies earmarked for local and national emergencies as well as for seed grants and special projects — has grown from \$2.7 million in 1974 to more than \$80 million at the end of the current fiscal year.

"Brian's singular accomplishment was his vision for strengthening the Jewish community locally and overseas," says Phyllis Cook of the federation, which oversees the endowment fund.

"He is a good fund-raiser (and) a great salesman. He has passionate convictions," Cook says.

"He's not a manager, he's a leader," she adds, perhaps alluding to some of the criticisms that have been leveled against his stewardship.

One Jewish professional whose organization derives some of its funding from the coffers of the Jewish Federation is so incensed by Brian Lurie that he refuses to go on record lest "I open up a whole can of worms."

"Just let me say, all is not what it seems about Brian," he says.

Others, also covered in anonymity, point out that although Lurie is a terrific fund-raiser, his concerns revolve more around the state of Israel than the needs of the local Jewish community. "Especially," says one disaffected observer, "the Jewish poor."

In replying to his critics, Lurie says, "My passion has always been the diasporous relationship," which refers to the historic and repeated dispersion of Jews throughout the world that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 was intended to remedy. "That is my hot button. . . . That goes all the way back to 1966, when I lived in Israel. That starts with my rabbinic studies. But I am acutely aware of my responsibility to develop a strong and vibrant local Jewish community. . . . If you're pro-Israel or dedicated to Israel, that doesn't mean there isn't a tremendous spill-off of what you're able to do locally."

Lurie says that he has no marching orders from the search committee that recruited him for his new job, but he adds that "they wanted somebody who was obviously committed to Israel, who could articulate a vision. . . . They hired me because they were looking

for something different, not the same old thing."

By his own reckoning and that of others, Brian Lurie is, indeed, something *very* different.

To some, a menace. To others, a *mensch*.

"That means you're not as predictable as somebody who is known as level-headed, logical or serious," laughs Lurie. "The use of those other words makes people disquieted."

Physically, Lurie is a disquieting presence. One longtime observer and former foundation member has described Lurie's mien as "evangelical, like one of those TV preachers — more Robert Schuller than Jimmy Swaggart."

Middling tall and lanky, he is more handsome in person than his photographs indicate. With his quiet voice and flowing delivery, Lurie is reminiscent of a younger Werner Erhard — smooth, slick and somewhat otherworldly. Almost offhanded. Laconic. Sometimes, he seems too cool. Too relaxed. His blue-green eyes are piercing, luminous and nervous-making. He can either look directly at you or *through* you. There is a joke around his office that, says one former co-worker, "unless you've worked there for at least three years, Brian doesn't know you."

For his last unofficial days at the Federation, Lurie isn't dressing up. Sartorially, he is California Casual — taupe-gray Reeboks matching his cotton trousers picked up in the plaid of a taupe-and-camel sports jacket set off by a blue-and-fuchsia shirt. As he rummages through his office, packing up files, labeling cartons and going through days-old phone messages, he glances out his seventh-floor window at a now-unobstructed view of the Bay Bridge and sighs.

"My new office has a view of Grand Central Station," he laughs.

Lurie won his new post in New York over a herd of highly qualified professionals, those fast-talking, quick-stepping Easterners who were bred in the shark-infested waters of New York Jewish fund-raising, whose internecine rivalries make West Coast Jewish organizations pale in comparison. (Although Lurie left the Bay Area in August, he will return for a combination dinner-dance and roast at the Fairmont Hotel Saturday.)

While New York, with the largest Jewish population in the country, seems to be where most of the action is, one San Francisco Jewish community professional points out that "there are many of us who feel *blessed* to be 3,000 miles away from the constellation in New York of national Jewish organizations — all of whom are engaged sometimes in healthy relationships and sometimes in turf wars."

So the question remains: Why Brian Lurie? Why this Marin-dweller with hair permanently bleached by the chlorine of the Concordia Club pool, where he swims a mile each morning, and aqua eyes that seem focused on a point in the future rather than the detritus of an office in the throes of a major move?

Lurie is noncommittal.

"Well, I got the job, didn't I?" he says.

"It was almost irresistible. You've got almost 300,000 Jews who have come to Israel in the last 12 months. The face of Israel is changing right now and the opportunities to transform that society is the greatest since the creation of the state of Israel itself."

"Brian Lurie is a genius fund-raiser," says Karen Robbins, executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. "And *that*," she emphasizes, "is the name of the game."

Lurie concedes that his lengthy tenure has had its share of what he somewhat euphemistically describes as "not the most calming of episodes."

"Brian is definitely controversial," concedes his public relations director, Suzan Berns. "As the leader of our federation back in 1984, he did something nobody has ever done. With the backing of the board and the leaders, he took \$100,000 from the allocation of what goes to United Jewish Appeal, which then goes to the Jewish Agency in Israel, and sent it directly to Israel for special projects. . . . We became the bad guys of the Jewish federation movement — sort of the outcasts. People who did things differently."

"The \$100,000 was a special allocation (of a total of \$7 million) that was part of an attempt to reshape the Jewish Agency and to have it reprioritize itself," Lurie explains.

The genesis for the move, he says, was a paper he wrote with the help of the San Francisco Jewish leadership called "A Crossroads to Responsibility," in which Lurie advocated a more aggressive role for the local federation in making overseas allocations.

"We did not take that \$100,000 quietly," says Lurie with some pride. "We did it in a bold way, because we *did* want to challenge the system. And the system, I'm delighted to say, responded magnificently — after a time."

His critics, however, are almost unanimous in viewing such Lurie actions as those of a unilateral "Lone Ranger," showboating in a manner that is insensitive to local communities' needs.

While the San Francisco Jewish community was not exactly moribund when Lurie arrived at the federation in 1974, it was fairly assimilated and low profile. For American Jews, San Francisco is a unique place. Unlike cities in the East, South and Midwest, where Jews came in waves of immigration from Germany and then Russia and Eastern Europe, San Francisco's Jews, traveling west by wagon or sailing south to Cape Horn and north through the Pacific to the Golden Gate, were founding fathers in the pueblo of Yerba Buena.

They came in 1850 as merchants, ready to provide the gold prospectors heading for Sutter's Mill with goods and services. Most of them thought they would make their fortunes and leave. As such, there was little perceived need to reinforce their Judaism or ghettoize themselves as a protection against unfriendly, anti-Semitic elements.

But the Jews stayed and prospered. They founded synagogues and temples, started benevolent associations, donated monies to build opera houses, schools and theaters. As part of a cultural triumvirate — where the Italians were the fishermen, bankers and elected officials; the Irish the police and firemen and the merchant Jews the money behind arts and politics — the status stayed quo until after World War II, when servicemen who shipped out through San Francisco returned to start a new life. By that time, San Francisco's leading Jewish families had become so assimilated (often as Christian converts) that they were hardly more than cultural, and certainly not religious, Jews.

Born in Cleveland, Lurie was raised as a Reformed Jew in the famous congregation of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, The Temple. "Silver was a giant. A powerful Zionist, the Abba Eban of his time," Lurie says. "He was a huge influence on me."

As a kid, Lurie, whose current wardrobe is not untrendy, says he was "uncomfortable with materialism. All my friends were wearing these alligator shirts. I was wearing sweat shirts. That was my way. Maybe what I'm saying is this, and it has to do with this little bracelet, too," he says, holding up his arm, where he wears a colorfully woven friendship bracelet. "It was my way of saying, 'Hold it, this is not for me.'"

After graduating from Lafayette College with a B.A. in religious studies, Lurie entered the Jewish Institute of Religion at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He augmented his religious studies for a year at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, at the same time as the '67 war.

In 1968, he married for the first time and in 1969 was ordained as a rabbi. When a research job he had been counting on fell through, Lurie took a pastoral position as the assistant rabbi at Temple Emanuel in San Francisco. But by 1972, he was out of the practical rabbinate, after spending three years with one of the better "gigs" in Judaism.

"My career in the rabbinate was short and wonderful, but the No. 1 problem is that there is a rigid

seniority system," he explains. "That Brian Lurie after three years wanted to have a Temple Emanuel of his own, wasn't possible. It was against the rules. I would have had to go to the rabbinical equivalent of a farm club. And here I was offered a job where I was to be the No. 2 person in an organization of 500 people."

While Lurie was at Emanuel, he came to the attention of Ernest Michel, executive vice president of the United Jewish Appeal in New York.

Says Michel, now retired and UJA's vice president-emeritus, "I was trying to find somebody I could work with. I sensed immediately that here was the individual I wanted to bring into the organization. Brian was young, articulate, attractive. He had ideas and charisma. He spoke Hebrew. He knew Israel. He had all the qualifications. I sensed there was a chemistry, which is always important in the activities we were involved in. Right on the spot, I offered him the job."

Lurie learned his fund-raising chops in New York and returned to the Bay Area with his wife, Mimi, and their two young children. He dived in immediately and was so immersed in the arduous and rewarding job of lighting a match under the Jewish community that his marriage ended.

Mimi Lurie subsequently married Peter Haas, scion of one of San Francisco's founding families, at a time when Haas was lay president of the Jewish Federation, an act that had gossips whispering behind their hands for months. (Mimi Haas refused to be interviewed for this story).

"No," says Lurie in carefully measured tones, "the divorce did not impact on my career. I am a very optimistic person. I'm a romantic. That's probably one of the reasons I was hired. You need people who aren't so clear thinking. But the divorce really grounded me. I'm human. Totally human. Totally vulnerable. It was a very sobering and, unfortunately, a very profound experience in my life. I'm a rabbi. I take being a rabbi very seriously. I take the sanctity of the family as serious.

"And here, my own family was

blowing up. So it was real hard. ... As for Peter Haas, we've maintained a relationship ever since. For me, it has not affected my ability to perform my job."

In the early '80s, Lurie met a well-born native San Franciscan named Caroline Fromm. Three months after they started dating, the two married. Caroline Fromm Lurie, 45, is a psychologist with a "garden variety" practice, "limited to regular people, healthy neurotics." Together, she and Lurie have two children of their own, Alexander, 7, and Sonia, 4. The move to the East (where the Luries will live in Greenwich, Conn., and Lurie will commute to his Manhattan job) is a difficult one for all concerned.

"I did have serious reservations," says Caroline Lurie. "(But) I would not have not stood in his way. There is no sense to live in paradise with a man who is unhappy with his job. I look at this as an adventure. He knows I didn't want to move, but as long as we have each other and the family, it's OK."

Caroline Lurie says that her husband "couldn't have stayed here. He would have died on the vine. He's at the peak of his vision and he has so much to do. He needs a bigger arena. I don't think he is particularly interested in remaining comfortable for the rest of his life. And if I take that into account, I have no choice.

Brian Lurie was faced with an arduous task when he took the federation job in 1974 after 18 months in New York.

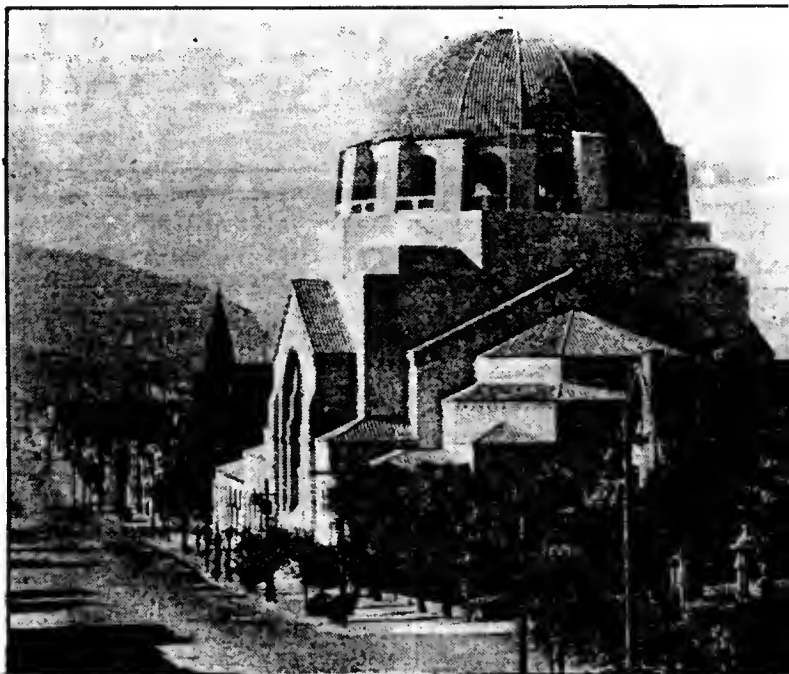
In 1973-74, Israel was embroiled in yet another armed conflict. Lurie capitalized on the Jewish community's loyalty and affection for the Jewish state to build a fund-raising constituency.

"Brian based his whole pitch on Israel," explains the J.C.C.'s Karen Robbins. "He gave people a cause, a rallying point. He started to take people there on 'missions,' and began making direct relationships with the Israeli infrastructure. Brian has a mission to build a world Jewish community and to ensure that Israel remains a homeland for the Jewish people."

Entering his 50th year, Rabbi Brian Lurie could have stayed in San Francisco. Perhaps he is unwilling to admit, as his wife did for him, that he needs to be constantly challenged. And if he has any doubts about moving into the center ring of American Jewish fund-raising, he will not say. But, like all good rabbis familiar with the Talmud and the Midrash, he's got a story to tell:

"Let me preface this by saying that I'm like everybody else herein San Francisco except for maybe my wife. I love Joe Montana. I think he's incredible. So, one day I was stopped on the street by a TV crew. They said, 'Sir, we would like to ask you a question. If you had the opportunity to be the best quarterback in the world and make millions of dollars and come away with a debilitating injury, would you trade places? Would you be Joe Montana?' 'No,' I said, 'I love what I do.' The reporter said, 'You must have not understood us.'"

Lurie said, "No. I understood you perfectly. I love what I do. I don't want to be anybody else. Period."



Lurie was assistant rabbi at Temple Emanu-el for three years.

FILE PHOTO

JCF director heading list for top UJA job

By JAMES DAVID BESSER
Bulletin Correspondent

Rabbi Brian Lurie, executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation for the past 17 years, reportedly is the leading candidate for the presidency of the national United Jewish Appeal.

If selected, Lurie, 48, would replace Stanley B. Horowitz, who has held the

post since 1983. Horowitz, who resigned in February effective June 30, will remain at UJA as a consultant until the end of the year.

Lurie, a Reform rabbi who announced last year he would leave his San Francisco post by June of 1992 to pursue other opportunities, confirmed he is a candidate for the UJA job but declined further comment.

Other sources said, however, that Lurie is the top contender, although the UJA search committee still is interviewing candidates considered outsiders from the world of Jewish professionals.

The fact that Lurie leads in the contest, observers said, reflects UJA's desire to develop creative new approaches both to the fund-raising process and the allocation of the organization's \$22 million annual op-

erating budget.

Lurie has been considered a maverick for bucking the system and allocating some community funds directly to projects in Israel, bypassing the established UJA route.

In 1986, the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties touched off a major

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THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JEWISH BULLETIN

MAY 17, 1991

JCF head Brian Lurie leading race for top UJA job

(Continued from Page 1)

controversy by earmarking \$100,000 collected in its fund-raising campaign for projects it itself selected in the Jewish state.

The action came in response to widespread complaints about the lack of control federations had over how their money was being allocated by the Jewish Agency in Israel.

Despite initial complaints from UJA that the JCF was bucking the system, the San Francisco protest led to the reshaping of policies as well as management — of the Jewish Agency.

Lurie is widely regarded as an innovator willing to take a hard look at the way Jewish organizations allocate their funds, and to assert the right of American Jews to have a say in how their charitable dollars are spent in Israel.

According to another federation executive who requested anonymity, Lurie is also "a wizard at fund-raising," a quality that could help UJA meet the enormous demands resulting from the resettlement of Soviet Jews in Israel at a time of relatively flat UJA-federation campaigns.

The new UJA president also will confront a growing move to merge the agency with the Council of Jewish Federations, the umbrella organization for all federations in the United States and Canada. Some Jewish activists contend such a merger would eliminate duplication of services and add to the efficiency of the Jewish philanthropic process.

Marvin Lender, UJA's national chairman, said his organization is looking for innovative, flexible

leadership.

"The person we choose [as president] must be able to deal with the issues before us, which are a lot different than they were in the past," he said. "Israel is at a different point in its development — and its relationship to the diaspora; the person we choose must be able to work with that."

Lender also indicated that the group is looking for an outstanding communicator and fund-raiser.

"The most important characteristic of the person we hire is that there has to be a real passion for Israel," he said, "and there has to be an ability to communicate that feeling to the American Jewish community."

Horowitz's successor will step into a lucrative as well as chal-



Rabbi Brian Lurie

lenging post: Some reports indicated the compensation package for the UJA president is in excess of \$200,000 per year.

In recent weeks, it has become evident that Lurie and JCF leaders have agreed on his departing earlier than the June 1992 date originally suggested.

The JCF search committee set up to replace Lurie reportedly is close to announcing its decision. Sources said it has narrowed its list to three candidates: Wayne Feinstein, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles; William Bernstein, assistant director of the Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund of Baltimore; and Nate Levine, Lurie's associate director at the JCF.

According to those sources, the committee will either select one of the three candidates by sometime in June or begin a new search.

Lurie targets fund raising as priority of new UJA job

By GARTH WOLKOFF
Of the Bulletin Staff

Diaspora Jews have not been paying their Israeli bills, says Rabbi Brian Lurie. And the way he sees it, he'll become Israel's tax collector in the United States as of Sept. 1.

That's when he assumes the top spot at the United Jewish Appeal, which mainly raises money for Israel.

The UJA, headquartered in New York City, chose Lurie as its chief executive officer last week, plucking him from his post as executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation.

"The money we give to Israel is Jewish taxes," Lurie told reporters from the *Jewish Bulletin* and the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* Tuesday. "Just like the Israelis give various taxes to do what they do to build a state, [what we give] is not charity. [We're] giving money to build a Jewish people in the land of Israel."

Diaspora Jews should now raise an additional \$1 billion for the massive Soviet immigration to Israel, and for the resettlement of the 14,194 Ethiopian Jews just rescued, Lurie maintains — and charges himself with the task of extracting those funds.

In fact, he wants to get more money from Jewish donors than ever before.

How? "I hope that I will be able get the UJA leadership to inspire other lay peo-

ple to take positions of responsibility, and make gifts that are extraordinary because these are extraordinary times," says Lurie, 48.

Under his influence, the UJA is expected to respond to what Lurie declares is Israel's greatest need right now: economic stability. The UJA, he predicts, will pump up U.S.-Israel trade relations, bring thousands more Jews to Israel to witness that country's "miracles" (and then, presumably, donate more money), and change its image both in Israel and in the United States.

"I want the UJA to help facilitate economic development [between the United States and Israel] to whatever degree possible," he adds. "But that's something I want to discuss with UJA lay leadership. It's one of my agenda items."

This will mark Lurie's second stint with UJA, having served as its New York executive assistant in 1972 after finishing a three-year tenure as assistant rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, his only post as a congregational rabbi.

During his subsequent 17-year leadership at the JCF, he more than tripled that federation's annual campaign, from \$6 million to \$18 million.

Lurie declined to say what accomplishment he's most proud of in his career, referring reporters instead to his *curriculum vitae*, but his supporters note that at the JCF he instituted the first American summer-in-Israel youth program for confirmands and Otzma, the year-long program in Israel for young people, and was instrumental in helping develop the Project Renewal program.

Also coming to fruition during his tenure, his supporters point out, were the Jewish Community Museum, the Marin Jewish Community Campus, the Albert L. Schultz Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto, and the Jewish Community Federation building.

Lurie, who once called himself "the CEO of the Jews," also has been a master fund-raiser.

As chief executive officer for the UJA, "my primary task will be to raise a lot more money," Lurie notes. "We are the richest diaspora community ever, but we are raising modest amounts compared to how wealthy we are. We're far richer than [Israel]."

At the same time, Lurie chastises Israelis as well as Americans for not making the Israeli economic sea easier to navigate for Soviet Jews — and for not making the state more open and dynamic.

"You don't see the kind of leadership [needed in Israel],

and commitment to making this *aliyah* as successful as it should be," he opines. "The political system doesn't seem willing to bend enough, and be flexible and respond to this national opportunity."

Speaking from his top-floor federation office with a bay view that until recently was blocked by the freeway, Lurie declares a need to bring American Jews closer to Israelis in all ways, linking an "existential difference" between the world's two largest population of Jews.

Israelis "look at the Americans coming over to Israel in their air-conditioned buses" and can't relate to them.

"We're one people but with very dissimilar experiences... When I went into the *chederaton* [sealed room] during the Scud attacks, my friends' children were there. But my children were here. So there's an existential difference. There's no ifs, ands or buts: We're not the same people in that sense; we're not under the same threat; we don't have the same life experience."

Lurie intends to use his new position to bridge that gap, a necessity "because we cannot move forward as a Jewish people, or even as a state of Israel, without the understanding that we are inextricably tied together."

How? Through people-to-people programs and, ultimately, through fund raising, he indicates.

"If you can get [Americans] to go over to Israel and watch those Ethiopians come off the plane, you would change [the Americans'] lives and change the nature of their giving... The UJA took 4,500 people over to Israel last year. Let's have a goal of 10,000."

The rabbi, who will replace Stanley Horowitz at the UJA helm, will leave his JCF position sometime in July. He will be succeeded by Wayne L. Feinstein, who currently is executive vice president of the Jewish Federation Council of Los Angeles.

Lurie will take over at the UJA, which raises hundreds of millions of dollars annually for Israel and overseas Jewish needs through 179 local U.S. federations, at a time when Soviet and Ethiopian immigration has left the Jewish Agency in a financial bind, putting new pressures on American Jewry to come up with more cash.

Lurie's reputation as a "mav-

erick" while leading the JCF may have been the very reason he was chosen by the UJA. That reputation stemmed mostly from his bucking the system and allocating some community funds directly to projects in Israel, bypassing the established UJA route.

In 1986, the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties touched off a major controversy by earmarking \$100,000 collected in its fund-raising campaign for projects it selected itself in Israel.

The action came in response to widespread complaints about the lack of control federations had over how their money was being directed by the Jewish Agency, which allocates money collected in the United States.

Despite initial complaints from the UJA, the San Francisco protest led to the reshaping of policies — as well as management — of the Agency.

Lurie also had criticized the Agency for its large bureaucracy.

"We challenged the system to change," he recalls. "We asked for a greater accountability. Streamlining the system, making the Jewish Agency less political, having the donors be more involved in making the allocations — every one of these things has changed."

Now Lurie faces the challenge of updating the UJA itself. The organization, which has 200 em-

Robert Loup of Denver, a former UJA national chairman who served on the search committee that selected Lurie, contends that "at a particular moment in time, he was somewhat outside the establishment. But frankly, a lot of what he has attacked has been changed."

"People might question his choice in how he expressed his criticism, but everyone endorses his feelings."



Photo by Suzan Berns

Outgoing JCF executive director Rabbi Brian Lurie (left) is congratulated by Mike Welch, JCF director of communications, for getting top UJA job.

ployees and an operating budget of \$28 million, has come under criticism from some Jewish federation leaders that it is top heavy with leaders and duplicating work done by other Jewish agencies.

Even so, the UJA's general campaign last year raised \$765 million — in addition to more than \$420 million in the successful Operation Exodus drive to aid the absorption of Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel.

Lurie acknowledged this week he was probably hired for his fund-raising acumen. But there were other reasons as well, he says.

Specifically, he cites his "commitment to Israel" and leadership qualities.

Besides, he says, "I'm a romantic... Organizations choose romantics at time of tremendous challenge, times of concern. They dream, they are optimistic. As a consequence, they help systems and countries move forward."

Despite new job in N.Y., Lurie will keep home here

Rabbi Brian Lurie believes you can't leave home. So he won't — even though he's taken a job in New York.

The United Jewish Appeal named Lurie as its CEO last week, which means he will live "in the burbs" outside Manhattan, where

the UJA is headquartered.

But he'll be in San Francisco frequently, he says, and will keep a home here. Looking out over the San Francisco Bay from his office, the former Jewish Community Federation executive president says moving, even

temporarily, from San Francisco will be difficult.

"It's hard. It's very hard. I have four children down here, I have a wife that was born here. I have an enormous number of friends in a community I love."

Lurie originally had moved to

San Francisco after graduating from Hebrew Union College in 1969. He lives now in the Marin County hamlet of Ross with his wife, Caroline, and his two children Alexander and Sonia.

The rabbi has two other sons, Ari, who attends Boston Uni-

versity, and Daniel, who lives with his first wife.

Two weeks ago, as he said goodbye at the JCF annual dinner, Lurie wept visibly.

"I weep easily," he says. "I'm a very emotional person. People don't know that but it's true."



Jewish Community Federation president, Donald H. Seiler, presents Rabbi Brian Lurie with a book listing donors to the Brian Lurie Fund, established by the Jewish Community Endowment Fund to recognize outstanding efforts in strengthening ties to Israel.

Tribute dinner for Brian Lurie is full of comedy, irreverence

After "Bye Bye Brian," Jewish communal dinners may never be the same again.

For one thing, there were no speeches. For another, the janitor — wearing a baseball cap sideways and sweeping the stage before the show — was none other than Richard "Dick" Swig, member of one of San Francisco's best-known families and owner of the Fairmont Hotel, where the event was held.

Saturday night's community farewell for Rabbi Brian Lurie, now chief executive officer for the New York-based United Jewish Appeal after 17 years as executive

director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation, stayed well away from the usual kind of homage paid to a community leader.

Instead, it stuck to its show biz theme and gave community members the opportunity to giggle at some of Lurie's eccentric and well-known habits.

Even "Israel Calling," a multimedia presentation highlighting Lurie's life and career, was in line with the show biz design, juxtaposing pictures of Lurie the infant and Lurie the adult, and demonstrating that his penchant for heavy telephone use began at an early age.

"If there'd been 12 speeches telling us what a wonderful guy Brian was, it wouldn't have been as effective, nor as much fun, as the musical and multi-media presentation," said Ernest Weiner, executive director of the American Jewish Committee in San Francisco, between dances with his wife.

"Hello Netanyahu," the cast sang to public relations consultant Ron Berman's lyrics, "This is Brian Lurie/I'm flying into Ben-Gurion to you.../Listen, Be-Be babbie/I'm flying into Ben-Gurion on Friday night/Yes, I know it's Shabbat/But I'm a rabbi/So what's that got to do with me?/Oh, and have Teddy and the Olmert brothers/pick me up at the airport..."

On arrival at their tables, guests found a playbill for the evening

and a flower centerpiece in the shape of the New York skyline.

As they ate and talked, the cast, led by musical director Scott Singer, sang "The Carnegie, the Carnegie/You'll be eating at the Carnegie/You'll be getting food to die for/Hot pastramele on rye/For you can have it all/You'll have a matzah ball/At the Carnegie..."

The singers continued to the tune of *New York, New York*: "Watch out all you Jews/He's coming your way/He'll make a grand new start of it /At UJA/They're gonna wake up/And start making pledges galore/And when they think they're through/He'll ask 'em for more..."

Following the singers, JCF president Don Seiler presented Lurie a book containing the names of those who have so far contributed to the new community prize, the Brian Lurie Israel-Diaspora Relations Award, and of a copy of Lurie's oral history.

Lurie, introduced by his successor in San Francisco, Wayne Feinstein, took the stage for just a few moments with three of his four children — Art, Daniel and Alexander — and promised the crowd that he had by no means cut his ties with the Bay Area.

And with the few short minutes of serious talk over, it was time for more shmoozing, kibbitzing and dancing to the sounds of the Bux Deluxe Society Band.



Rabbi Brian Lurie (right) and Ira Levy, who played the former JCF director in "Bye Bye Brian," share a laugh after the show Saturday.



Richard Swig sweeps stage in Fairmont Hotel ballroom.

Adar 14, 5754 / February 25, 1994

UJA to forge new Israel and diaspora partnership

LARRY YUDELSON

Jewish Telegraphic Agency

NEW YORK — It's not hard to imagine the reaction at the United Jewish Appeal headquarters when word recently got out that Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin had told diaspora Jews their "charity" was no longer needed.

It is the UJA's job, after all, to raise the very money for Israel that Beilin was appearing to denigrate, and to make sure that Israel's cause is heard amid the clamor of competing local Jewish needs.

At the same time, the thrust of Beilin's remarks — at least as he clarified them after being called on the carpet by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin — were remarkably compatible with the views of UJA's executive vice president, Brian Lurie.

Lurie, a Reform rabbi and former head of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation, agrees that the idea of an impoverished Israel, totally dependent for survival on diaspora largess, is both inaccurate and unfair.

"In the early 1950s, when the Israeli minister of finance used to come to the United States, his first stop was to [visit] the president of the UJA to find out when the next payment would be. UJA paid 30 percent of the Israeli budget."

Now, "we're providing something important but different. Israel is not a weak country. It's strong," said Lurie, noting the economic growth rate and the number of American companies interested in investing in the Jewish state.

Whatever the disagreement between Rabin and Beilin, the fact remains that the prime minister himself called for a "new partnership" between Israel and the diaspora when he addressed the Council of Jewish Federations in November.

Precisely how to transform the philanthropy into a new partnership is something Lurie, who came to the UJA in 1991, has been thinking about for a long time.

Now he has a chance to put his ideas into play. UJA is gearing up to launch its 1995 campaign in the spring, which it hopes will top the \$700 million raised in 1993 (the '94 campaign is less than halfway through).

Already there are some major changes planned. The 1995 fund-raising drive will be the organization's first in several years not overshadowed by a "special campaign" to help Jews from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

As a result, instead of presenting itself as
See UJA DRIVE, Page 33

UJA drive to be 'living bridge' between Israel, diaspora

Continued from Page 1

a rescue squad, saving imperiled Jews around the world, UJA will seek to become "the living bridge" between Israel and the diaspora, according to Lurie.

"It's a bridge of people coming in both directions, a bridge of ideas," he said.

He anticipates that the new campaign will bring together the disparate elements of UJA-funded activity — and enable the organization to navigate the shifting currents of Israel-diaspora relations.

With that in mind, Lurie outlined themes for campaign '95 and beyond. The first two, which focus on Operation Exodus and Jews in the former Soviet Union, are to continue financing the Jewish immigration to Israel (estimated at 70,000 people a year), and to support the hundreds of thousands of Jews expected to remain in the former Soviet Union.

In Lurie's words, such assistance will allow many Jews "to live out their years in dignity."

The UJA-funded American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which has long provided services in Eastern Europe, also has been active in the former Soviet Union for two years.

"I don't want to build something to keep people there," Lurie said. "I want to build something so people will understand what it means to be Jewish, and will want to leave."

While those efforts look to Europe, the American-Israeli component of the living bridge will be centered around "Partnership 2000," a program that seeks to revive

the Project Renewal system of twin cities linking American federations with developing communities in Israel.

Diaspora communities will work directly with Israeli communities in the Negev and Galilee to solve local programs.

Since the focus is as much on connection as on charity, the program will involve joint decision-making by the Israeli and American communities. There will be more of a "peer relationship" between the two groups than there was in Project Renewal, said Lurie.

And, reflecting comments by both Beilin and Rabin, the Partnership 2000 program will have an economic development component, underwriting programs to create jobs in Israel.

Unlike Project Renewal in the 1970s and '80s, Partnership 2000 is being planned not as a separate campaign but will instead receive a percentage of a community's regular campaign. Scheduled to be launched during the 1995 campaign, Partnership 2000 will be starting in a few communities and

expanding to others over the next few years.

Meanwhile, the UJA will move past its traditional "overseas" focus to deal with issues of American Jewish continuity and identity.

One aspect of that goal is promoting "the Israel experience," or educational trips to Israel, which Lurie called "a major building block in the annual campaign."

The UJA is part of a consortium of Jewish groups hoping to raise the number of American Jewish youth traveling to Israel to 50,000 annually.

Most of the current Israel experience programs, said Lurie, go through the Joint Educational Authority operated by the UJA-funded by the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist

Organization.

"Already we're putting a lot of money to play into this area; obviously that has to be sharpened and honed," he said.

Finally, the bridge leads directly into Jewish continuity at home. That means a stronger UJA presence at schools and oth-

er community institutions.

"If you believe in the Israel experience, you have to have something before and after, to prepare for the experience and to heighten it," said Lurie. "For the UJA, it means we have to take a hard look at what we're doing on campus."

At the same time, "we'll help local federations in publicizing concerns over continuity. It's the first time we've gotten involved in a domestic issue. But it's not really domestic; it's a worldwide Jewish issue."

Last year, UJA issued promotional materials that invoked the word continuity but barely mentioned concerns about the future of American Jewish life. Instead, the materials dealt with external threats to Jewish survival in Israel, the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

"Truthfully, I was a little uncomfortable with that," said Lurie. Continuity "wasn't that well-explained."

For Lurie, "the Israel experience is about Jewish continuity. Taking 8,599 adults to Israel [on UJA missions] is Jewish continuity. It's an Israel experience, a powerful educational experience."

But is promoting American Jewish continuity a viable hook on which to hang a fund-raising campaign?

Lurie believes it can be. "There have been millions of dollars raised," he said. "There is already one earmarked gift of a million dollars for an endowment; two more are on the way. Enormous money will be given. It touches people very personally. It's their progeny's Jewish identity."



Rabbi Brian Lurie

Brian Lurie turns the table on Peres — he solicits him

LARRY YUDELSON

Jewish Telegraphic Agency

NEW YORK — In an example of the traditional Israel-diaspora relationship being turned on its head, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was solicited for a contribution when he concluded addressing the United Jewish Appeal here last week.

UJA Executive Vice President Rabbi Brian Lurie made a quiet pitch for the Israeli government to allocate \$10 million that would be used to help send 50,000 American Jewish teenagers to Israel each summer.

The \$10 million would constitute a third of a \$30 million "megafund," Lurie said in his opening address to the UJA National Campaign Conference, held here this week.

The other partners of this nascent fund would be the Jewish Agency for Israel — the major recipient of UJA funds in Israel — and diaspora Jewry.

In launching the idea of a \$30 million fund, the UJA is upping the ante in its effort to make a trip to Israel a universal rite of passage for every American Jewish teenager.

"This would be like a beacon, a galvanizing force to bring this Jewish continuity issue to the fore," said Lurie, who is the former executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation.

At the same time, it reflects an era when UJA leaders feel that the relationship between American and Israeli Jews has moved from one of donors and recipients to one of partnership. And in that case, the question is shifting from what Ameri-



Rabbi Brian Lurie, UJA executive vice president, solicited Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for \$10 million to help send American teens to Israel each summer.

can Jews can do for Israel to that of what Israel can do for American Jews.

"Fifty years ago, Israel needed us. Today, we need Israel," said Richard Pearlstone, UJA's new national chairman.

Currently, the UJA is in the middle of a three-year, \$750,000 commitment, together with the CRB Foundation and other Jewish organizations, to promote local pilot programs encouraging Israel trips for American Jewish youth.

One such local program held its first

event late last month near Washington, as 750 seventh- and eighth-graders showed up for an "Israel Fest."

Held at a local amusement complex — the bumper cars were transformed into a Tel Aviv traffic jam — the program hopes to generate continuing excitement about Israel trips. It is hoped that excitement will pay off in three or four years' time, when the teens travel to Israel as 10th or 11th-graders.

Known as Israel Quest, the program is

sponsored by the UJA Federation of Greater Washington, together with local synagogues and youth groups.

The goal is to portray Israel as a "high-adventure" opportunity. The program's logo, as printed on colorful T-shirts, describes Israel: "It's Hot. It's Cool. It's Yours!"

Organizers of the Washington gala were excited about the large turnout.

And in New York, Lurie and other leaders of the national program are excited by the several million-dollar gifts received to sponsor such events, and provide trip subsidies, in cities across the country.

"It's an opportunity for givers interested in the youth arena," Peter Gefen, director of the CRB Foundation's Israel Experience program, said at the UJA conference.

Lurie said that discussions of the \$30 million fund are only at a preliminary stage. While the Jewish Agency share represents UJA money, the diaspora share might come from other earmarked philanthropic gifts.

Lurie described it as a "renewable" fund. Whether it would be designed to last one year or five is something not yet decided.

Lurie already has had several discussions with Israeli leaders about the fund. His brief conversation with Peres at the campaign conference was only a reminder, he noted.

The proposal also has been discussed with Israel's ministries of tourism and finance, as well as with the Prime Minister's office, according to Menachem Revivi, head of the Joint Israel Office of the UJA, Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal.

JEWISH BULLETIN ■ DECEMBER 1, 1995

Lurie to quit UJA in 1996

NEW YORK (JTA) — The United Jewish Appeal is making a change at the top, and it will bring Rabbi Brian Lurie home to Marin, where his family lives.

The UJA's chief executive officer and executive vice president this week announced the appointment of Bernie Moscovitz to handle the day-to-day management of the UJA as chief operating officer and vice president for the next nine months.

Lurie, who for 17 years was executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation and remains a part-time resident of Ross, said he would stay on at the UJA until September 1996. That would fulfill the five-year term he promised when he signed on as the UJA's executive vice president.

The move is "a management addition that will strengthen the agency," Lurie said Tuesday.

Until he leaves the UJA, Lurie said he

would continue to focus on the planned restructuring of diaspora Jewry's central fund-raising organizations and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The new entity being worked out is expected to consolidate the UJA, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal, which funnels campaign money to the Jewish Agency.

Moscovitz, who had been the UJA's national marketing director, will oversee the remainder of the 1996 annual campaign and the beginning of the 1997 campaign.

"We need somebody to manage the day-to-day affairs and focus on the annual campaign" said Lurie, who has been traveling extensively for his job.

Lurie said he plans to return to the Bay Area when he leaves the UJA, but he is not sure what he will do. For now, he said, he is "concentrating on the huge job" ahead in the next nine months.



Rabbi Brian Lurie

JEWISH BULLETIN ■ JULY 12, 1996 33

Peres says Lurie 'brought a golden gate to Jewish life'

CYNTHIA MANN

Bulletin Correspondent

JERUSALEM — Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres last month helped honor Rabbi Brian Lurie, the onetime S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation head who is resigning as the United Jewish Appeal's national executive vice president.

"You brought from San Francisco a golden gate to Jewish life," said Peres, and "a commitment from the depths of your bones, mind and heart."

The recently defeated premier added, "You

really revolutionized the job," and joked, "I know why I'm leaving, but I don't understand why you're leaving."

Luminaries from the Jewish world and from across the Israeli political spectrum gathered toward the close of the Jewish Agency annual assembly to pay tribute to Lurie, who joined the UJA five years ago and will officially leave on Sept. 1.

They included Likud Finance Minister Dan Meridor, Jewish Agency chairman Avraham Burg, UJA president Richard Wexler and Marvin Lender, a UJA board of trustees member and former national chair-

man.

But the highlight, by far, was the appearance of the former prime minister, who embraced Lurie warmly and praised his service and vision as a Jewish leader.

Lurie's tenure at the UJA was a controversial one. His hallmark was the drive to reform the organization and its sister institutions to reflect what he saw as a dramatically changing relationship between Israel and the diaspora.

Sharing the views of his controversial friend, former Israeli Minister Yossi Beilin, Lurie sought a more balanced partnership,

with both parties making a contribution.

This view was best reflected institutionally in new programs like Partnership 2000, which twins North American cities with Israeli regions for joint development projects, and in Lurie's stepped-up promotion of Israel experience programs for diaspora youth.

Critics of Lurie say he was not able to match his vision with administrative skills, failed to implement many of his ideas and sowed mistrust among Israelis at the Jewish Agency, the primary Israeli recipient of funds raised by the UJA-federation campaign.

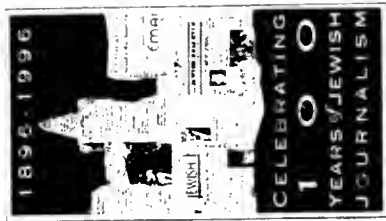
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JEWISH BULLETIN

OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Volume 100, Number 28

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Lurie back in S.F. to head Jewish museum

NATALIE WEINSTEIN
Bulletin Staff

Seeking to become a leading cultural force, the Jewish Museum San Francisco has recruited a new chief who lacks an arts background but offers renowned fundraising skills and an international reputation.

Rabbi Brian Lurie, a familiar face who

left the Bay Area five years ago to run the New York-based United Jewish Appeal, was hired last week to help develop the museum's new site and expand its mission.

"Brian's ideas and the program we're developing will be on the leading edge of reaching and tying together the American Jewish community," said Fred Levinson, museum board president.

Lurie's vision for the museum, set to open

its new site alongside Yerba Buena Gardens in 1999, goes far beyond bolstering its art exhibits or presenting lectures, classes, theater, music and dance — though all these programs are in the works. He also hopes to regularly broadcast live, interactive events to 25 Bay Area Jewish institutions and to reach local homes via cable television, CD-ROMs and the Internet.

"You've got to go to the people," Lurie

said.

He believes that focusing on cultural Judaism may be one of the keys to capturing the attention of the Bay Area, which he calls "one of the most assimilated Jewish communities in the world."

"The visual arts and the education that comes with it can be one of the cornerstones of the Jewish community in America

See JEWISH, Page 33

Jewish Museum recruits rabbi to serve as new chief

Continued from Page 1

in the 21st century. It's not a small thing," Lurie said.

Long described as an innovator and credited with raising hundreds of millions of dollars over the past two decades, Lurie starts work as the museum's chief executive officer on Sept. 1 — the same day his current job as the UJA's executive vice president ends.

The Cleveland native's Bay Area ties reach back to 1969, when Lurie became an assistant rabbi at San Francisco's Reform Congregation Emanu-El.

In 1972, he left to work as executive assistant with the UJA of Greater New York. He returned to the Bay Area in 1974 to become executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation. He remained in that job for 17 years.

Levinson called Lurie "one of the key figures" in the museum's founding 12 years ago. When the federation decided to stop renting space in San Francisco and build its own headquarters, Lurie insisted that a museum be included on the first floor as a way of welcoming the public to the city's central Jewish address.

Five years ago, Lurie left the Bay Area to head one of the nation's largest Jewish fund-raising institutions. Last year, the UJA campaign raised more than \$615 million for Israel and international Jewish needs.

Lurie joined the UJA with the stipulation that he would stay only five years. So the 53-year-old's departure and his return to the Bay Area are not a surprise.

"It was driven by personal reasons," he said. "I gave it my best shot...It was time to move on."

In 1993, his wife and children left the East Coast and moved back to their home in the Marin County town of Ross.

Lurie began commuting back and forth across the country.

"Last year, I flew 300,000 miles. I have two small children and a wife I love," he said. "This is where my heart is."

Lurie turned over the UJA's day-to-day operations to another administrator in February, though he has continued to work out of his home and to travel across the country and to Israel.

His decision to accept the job as the Jewish Museum's chief executive officer comes as somewhat of a shock — even to him.

"Am I a curator? Absolutely not," he said — nor does he plan to become one. But Lurie said he will work to expand his knowledge of the arts and will surround himself with qualified staff.

A museum consultant began recruiting Lurie in February, months before a national search officially began. Lurie, who has no formal training or background in the arts, initially turned down the offer. But after the museum board and staff formally decided to transform the museum into a multidimensional arts and cultural center, Lurie began to seriously consider the option.

"My love has been diaspora-Israel relations as long as anyone can remember," he said. "But it had a focus for me, as strengthening Judaism. I see this as another way of strengthening Judaism."

Seymour Fromer, director of Berkeley's Judah L. Magnes



Rabbi Brian Lurie

Museum, said the Jewish Museum's decision to hire someone outside the arts world is not anomalous.

"It's a trend to hire CEOs who are mostly responsible for fund-raising in art museums, symphonies and other cultural endeavors and have

the artistic management [performed] by people in the field," Fromer said.

Linda Steinberg, who has headed the Jewish Museum for the past eight years, will continue as director. She will focus on the current site, while Lurie focuses almost exclusively on the new site.

Steinberg has been credited with bringing innovative exhibitions to the museum, such as the works of "Maus" cartoonist Art Spiegelman, multimedia *menorot* created by cutting-edge artists, and in-depth looks into black-Jewish relations.

"I have every reason to believe that this will be a great creative collaboration and that, in fact, Brian's superior leadership and fund-raising skills will enable me to realize some of my most ambitious artistic visions," Steinberg said.

Lurie, who earned \$300,000 annually as UJA head and was among the nation's highest-paid Jewish community professionals, wouldn't reveal his new salary but described it as "significantly lower."

He will not sign a contract per se,

but rather a more relaxed "letter of understanding." Lurie plans to spend five years working exclusively for the museum, though he will be allowed periods of absence in order to pursue other Jewish projects.

While some might speculate that a transformed Jewish Museum will overshadow or swallow its Berkeley counterpart, neither Fromer nor Lurie expressed a desire for a merger.

Fromer, in fact, hopes that heightened interest in the Jewish arts can benefit everyone.

"I think it's a sign of seriousness: Hiring the leading fund-raiser in the United States signals new resources being brought to bear on the Jewish museums of Northern California. I hope it rubs off on all of us and other cultural endeavors," Fromer said.

No one can place a price tag yet on the Jewish Museum's proposed future. But Joyce Linker, a board vice president who served on the search committee, considers Lurie's ideas workable.

"I don't think we have to do it in one year," she said. "But if you don't have a dream, nothing will happen."

CURRICULUM VITAE

Brian L. Lurie

DATE OF BIRTH August 21, 1942

PLACE OF BIRTH Cleveland, Ohio

FAMILY Wife: Caroline
Four Children: Ari, Daniel, Alexander and Sonia

EDUCATION Lafayette College, 1960 - 1964
Major - Religion B.A.

Hebrew University, 1966 - 1967
Archeology and Jewish Studies

Hebrew Union College -
Jewish Institute of Religion, 1964 - 1969
Ordained Rabbi B.A.H.L. M.A.H.L

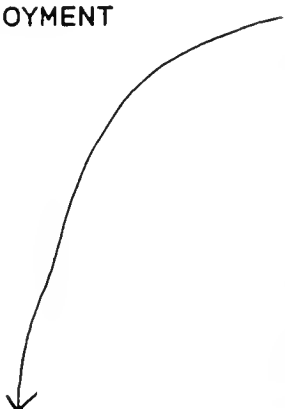
EMPLOYMENT 1974 - ~~Present~~ 1991
Executive Director
Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco,
the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

1972 - 1974
Executive Assistant
United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York
New York, NY

1969 - 1972
Assistant Rabbi
Temple Emanu-El
San Francisco, CA

1996-present
President
Jewish Museum

1991-1996
Executive Vice President
UJA - National



MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Fund Raising:

Annual Campaign

Directed growth of San Francisco Jewish Community Federation Campaign from \$6 Million to \$18 Million.

Endowment

Directed growth of San Francisco Jewish Community Federation Endowment from \$7 Million to \$75 Million.

Selected Capital and Special Campaigns of \$6 Million or More

Koret Building at Jewish Home for The Aged: \$10 Million

Jewish Community Federation Building: \$7 Million

Marin Jewish Community Campus: \$14 Million

Operation Exodus Campaign: \$20 Million

Selected Community Service and Special Achievements:

Created Summer in Israel Program, 1970 with 2,000 participants to date.

Created Otzma, A Year of Service for the Jewish people in Israel.

Created Jewish Community Museum of San Francisco.

Created Jewish Community Campus of Marin County.

Created Jewish Community Federation Building.

Facilitated the growth of the Jewish Day School Movement in San Francisco.

Major leadership role in the development of Project Renewal/Urban Renewal in Israel.

Major leadership role in reforming the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Major leadership role in the Community Campaign for Earthquake Relief.

Administrative Experience:

Managed the development of Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Regional Lay Leadership structure.

Managed the development of the Jewish Community Federation from thirty employees to seventy-nine.

Managed growth from one office to five offices in the West Bay and two offices in Israel.

Managed the following departments: fund raising, planning, budgeting and allocations, community development, communications/public relations, accounting and data processing.

Facilitated the development of the Jewish Community institutional infrastructure including a Jewish hospital, Jewish Home for The Aged, five Jewish Community Centers, Jewish Family and Children's Services, Jewish Vocational Service, Bureau of Jewish Education and Jewish Day Schools, which have a combined annual budget of approximately \$150 Million per year with 3,000 thousand employees.

SELECTED LECTURES/SPEECHES

Fund Raising

"Future of Federation Giving and the Role of the Professional"

(Campaign Staff Retreat for UJA Federation of Greater New York - September 5, 1990)

Israel-Diaspora Relations

"A Call to Action"

(The Council of Jewish Federations Special General Assembly - February 6, 1990)

Education

"The Status and Future of Israel-Diaspora Relations"

(Sherman Young Professional Institute, Brandeis University - July 1985)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

The North American/Israeli Partnership: A Call for Leadership

December 12, 1988

(San Francisco Jewish Community Federation)

Synopsis: Narrowing The Gap

A paper prepared for the Overseas Committee of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, by Earl Raab and Brian Lurie - March, 1987.

Forum - "PROJECT RENEWAL - A New Kind of Jewish Agency"
(Spring 1982 Issue #44)

Moment Magazine - "The Future of Jewish Fund Raising: A Panel Discussion"
(November 1979, Volume Four, Number Ten)

The Pedagogic Reporter - "Israel, The Key to Our Jewish Education"
(1970)

Rabbi Brian L. Lurie
President

Brian Lurie was hired as President of the Jewish Museum September of 1996. As the Chief Executive Officer of the Jewish Museum, he is responsible for the day-to-day operation as well as the expansion and transition to the new facility on Mission Street.

Prior to joining the Jewish Museum, Rabbi Lurie served for five years as Executive Vice President of the United Jewish Appeal and was responsible for the day to day operations of the organization including all fund raising campaigns. He was instrumental in launching the second phase of Operation Exodus and has provided the vision and strategic direction under which UJA has begun to broaden its mandate.

He developed the concept of "The Living Bridge", a metaphor which is redefining the broad range of relationships and the partnership, as equals, of American Jews and Israelis. Both the Israel Experience for teens and Partnership 2000 were created as pillars of the Living Bridge.

Prior to joining UJA, Rabbi Lurie served for seventeen years as Executive Director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties. During his tenure campaign results tripled.

From 1969-72 he served as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco. In 1967, he was attending classes at Hebrew University in Jerusalem when the Six-Day War broke out. He remained in Israel as a volunteer teacher, an experience which had a pivotal effect on his life.

Rabbi Lurie received his BA from Lafayette College in Easton, Penn. and a Masters in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. He was ordained a Rabbi in 1969. He recently received honorary degrees from both Lafayette College and Hebrew Union College.

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Eleanor K. Glaser

Raised and educated in the Middle West. During World War II, spent two years in the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve.

Senior year of college was taken in New Zealand, consequently A.B. degree in sociology from University of Michigan was granted in absentia. Study in New Zealand was followed by a year in Sydney, Australia, working for Caltex Oil Company.

Work experience includes such non-profit organizations as Community Service Society, New York City; National Society for Crippled Children and Adults and National Congress of Parents and Teachers in Chicago.

After moving to California in 1966, joined the staff of a local weekly newspaper, did volunteer publicity for the Judah Magnes Museum and the Moraga Historical Society, and was the Bay Area correspondent for a national weekly newspaper. Also served as a history docent for the Oakland Museum.

Additional travel includes Great Britain, Europe, Israel, Mexico, and the Far East.

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